

Mary's Immaculate Heart



by Father John F Murphy

Preface

In connection with the extension of the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the universal Church, our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, pointed out that beyond serving as a memorial and reminder of his solemn consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart in the Basilica of Saint Peter, December 8, 1942, the feast might, with the assistance of her in whose honor we celebrate it, be instrumental also in preserving peace among all nations and liberty for the Church of Christ; and further, with the repentance of sinners, it might be a strengthening of the faithful in the love of purity and the practice of virtue.

Without question the observance of the Feast of the Immaculate Heart is today a highly significant celebration in the liturgical year. In view of the dogmatic implications of the feast, the various statements of the Holy See, and the response everywhere on the part of the faithful to the devotion to Mary's Heart, the significance of both the feast and consecration of the world, and the importance of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart itself are readily recognized.

It was the devotion to the Sacred Heart which in previous decades guided a cold and erring world back toward the love of Christ and the acknowledgment of the Kingdom that is rightfully His. It would seem that again the grace of God is poured forth abundantly on a war-torn and pagan world, and men, through a devotion to the Mother of God, the "Hope of the World," are once more offered an opportunity for eternal salvation in the love and service of Mary and her divine Son.

In the devotion to the Immaculate Heart which prompts men to imitate the virtues of the Blessed Mother we see a true

blending of love and sacrifice, the very core and spirit of the Christian life. Through a devotion to her Immaculate Heart Mary will certainly form in us the likeness and virtues of her Son, and seeing more perfectly His image in us, she will love Him anew in us; and we, resembling our blessed Lord the more, will profit greatly from this closer union with Him.

Our nearness to Mary is a measure of our union with Christ and an indication of the supernatural value of our lives. In uniting ourselves to Mary we necessarily draw near to our blessed Lord.

"Nam quid est maius hodie, Domina, quam habere cor iunctum cordi tuo . . . nonne cor tuum plenum est gratiae Illius? Et si apertum est, gratia illanon decurrit in cor sibi iunctum?" (Stimulus Amoris inter opera S. Bonaventurae editum.)

Introduction

As in her mortal life, so also in the science of Sacred Theology the Mother of God is associated always with Christ. She forms with Him the foundation and cornerstone as well as the capstone of the economy of salvation. She not only brought the Incarnate Word into the world, she intimately shared in the work He came to accomplish, the redemption of men. Because of the full implications of her relationship with God and men she occupies a unique and exalted place in the dogma and liturgy of the Church and in the entire divine plan of Creation.

Down through the centuries the best minds of Christianity have sung the praises and excellencies of Mary, ". . . all generations shall call her blessed, the Mother of God, the Mistress of the world, the Queen of Heaven . . . who has given life and glory to all generations. For in her the angels find joy, the just grace, and the sinners forgiveness. Deservedly the eyes of all creatures are turned toward her, because in her, by her, and from her the benign hand of the Almighty re-created that which He had already created."

To Mary, indeed, men have turned for their greatest inspiration. It is she who has occasioned our greatest art and much of our best literature. But immeasurably greater than all these things, it is she who has inspired our greatest saints and who as Mother of all men and Refuge of sinners has led countless souls to Christ. Without question, after the example of Christ she is the greatest external grace the human soul encounters throughout life. But more than this, she is the Mediatrix of all graces.

To us Mary is our Mother and our Queen. Christ has given her to us as among His greatest gifts and it is His wish that we

honor her as He honors her and love her even as He loves her. As Mary among all creatures held and will hold forever the first place in the Sacred Heart of Christ, so also Christ wishes that next to our love for Him and our worship of the triune God His Blessed Mother should be the principal object of our devotion. To honor Mary is not simply to do Christ's will, for because of the union of Mother and Son, to honor Mary is to honor our Lord Himself. To know, love, and serve Mary is to know, love, and serve Christ.

The human will, however, is not moved to sincere acts of veneration unless the intellect first presents reasons for respect, esteem, and love. In the veneration of Mary's Immaculate Heart then, before we can render our Lady the full honor and love our Lord wishes, we must understand the excellencies and significance of her Heart.

Some of the external and more obvious reasons why this devotion is today of great significance are readily understood. The Christian world turns instinctively to Mary in time of tribulation. Further, the will of God in the spreading of the devotion is clearly manifest in the teaching authority of the Church.

The innumerable reasons for a new particular veneration of Mary's Immaculate Heart will unfold themselves as we consider this devotion in the body of the ensuing study. However it will be well to mention two things preliminary to our discussion first, what justifies our present treatise and, secondly, how we shall develop it.

Truly, in cases of sound devotional or theological writings the adage "de Maria nunquam satis" will be challenged by none of her children; however, beyond this, one of the principal reasons for our present emphasis is the fact that God in His providential goodness has instilled in the souls of

many of the faithful the desire to venerate His Blessed Mother in the devotion to her Immaculate Heart. Especially in English-speaking countries, where this veneration is seen as one of the great forces counteracting secularism, there is need for further explanation of the doctrinal basis of the growing devotion. It would be most unjust to say Mary's Heart is less honored by Catholics in these countries than elsewhere, yet it must be admitted that we find in the English tongue no excess of devotional, and a definitely limited amount of doctrinal explanations and treatises on the Immaculate Heart.

Therefore in partial answer to a very evident need we shall endeavor to supply an explanation of the doctrinal and dogmatic foundations of this great devotion.

In making our work a scientific study we shall logically proceed to consider the devotion in its fundamental causes. De facto the devotion exists and is flourishing; we will examine its nature therefore by a consideration of its causes.

The principal efficient cause of the devotion is of course the providence of God. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in whose wisdom and under whose guidance this particular veneration has been brought about, we find a devotion both supernaturally efficacious and humanly appealing. As a secondary efficient cause, however, we acknowledge the fostering of the devotion through the efforts of men. Therefore in the first part of our discussion we shall make a brief but relatively complete survey of the origins and development of the devotion as effected through the instrumentality of various saints, theological writers, and Church authorities. Thus we shall investigate the history of this devotion.

In the second part of our study we shall consider the devotion in itself, examining its intrinsic nature. We shall investigate the meaning of cult, devotion, and hyperdulia, and in the light of the papal instruction on how in this devotion we honor Mary's Heart, we shall see what distinguishes this particular Marian veneration from all others namely, the recognition of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the symbol of our Lady's extraordinary sanctity and especially her love. We shall investigate also, in connection with the heart, the nature of symbolism and how in our devotion the symbol of the heart is to be understood.

In the next section of our work we shall investigate the devotion in its final cause, which ultimately is of course to glorify God, but more proximately to unite us to Him through Mary's Heart. We honor Mary as the image of her Creator, reflecting in her Heart the glory of Christ's own Sacred Heart. The meaning and purpose of our devotion to Mary and imitation of her in this particular veneration is best realized in the Acts of Consecration and Reparation which we shall consider in the last part of this section of our treatise.

That our procedure is logical is perhaps better shown from the fact that devotion is, as we shall see, an act, an attitude, of will. Nothing however is willed unless it be known. Hence, in explaining devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we must know not only the object of this devotion and its end, but we must also consider the existence of this object. Hence we will treat of the history of the devotion (*an sit*), and of its object and end (*quid sit*). In concluding our work we shall point out the excellence of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart as the synthesis of Marian doctrine and the crown of Marian devotions (*quomodo sit*).

In view of such a consideration we hope that the place of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart in Marian veneration and in the entire Christian pattern will be made more evident, and that with a fuller understanding and deeper love men might say: "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary ... we ... consecrate ourselves forever ... to Thee and to Thy Immaculate Heart, our Mother, Queen of the World, that thy love and patronage may hasten the triumph of the Kingdom of God, and that all nations, at peace with one another and with God, may proclaim thee blessed and with thee may raise their voices to resound from pole to pole, in the chant of the everlasting Magnificat of glory, love, and gratitude to the Heart of Jesus, where alone they can find truth and life and peace."

Chapter 1 - Historial Conspectus of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart

In the history of the Church we find that God in His wisdom and goodness has inspired and directed the minds of men to the clarification of various points of revelation. One after another in a pattern fully understood only by God these treasures have been brought to the fore by saint and scholar, considered profoundly, and submitted to the infallible magisterium of the Church. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Church has investigated and explained century after century the many secrets of the Godhead hidden in the depths of Christian revelation. Through this unfolding of the ineffable truths of revelation souls are drawn to God, the source of every good.

Especially in our own time we see souls drawn to their Maker through the flowering of a devotion which has its roots in the distant past. Partly because we find so little on the history of this devotion in the English tongue, and partly because an understanding of the development of this great devotion through the centuries will better lead us to a realization of its precise theological meaning, we have attempted to offer a brief but complete survey of the growth of the devotion down through the years.

The cycles or periods in the history of the devotion as outlined by Father Giovanni Postius, C.M.F., and adopted by several other contemporary authors are, first, the Cycle of Tradition, of private devotion or germination, divided into the biblical, patristic, and transitional age; and the Legal Cycle, or that of public and liturgical devotion, subdivided into the age of preparation, age of privilege, and age of

triumph, which last subdivision brings us up to the present day.

Our outline will be for the most part a purely chronological one, and therefore not entirely different from the very satisfactory division outlined above. However, because the progress of the devotion was not a balanced and regular process down through the centuries, but rather a somewhat spontaneous development according to God's plan and coming out of a deeper understanding of the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it will perhaps depict the growth of the devotion in truer perspective to consider it primarily under purely chronological divisions. Unlike many other aspects of Mariology, we find here no beginning with the Council of Ephesus and gradual unfolding of the theological implications with each age making its contribution. We see rather how truths contained in the original deposit of faith are brought to the attention of the world, not in early decades, but years later, at a time when they seem most needed in our own day.

The Fathers on the Old Testament

Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, has pointed out that the remote vestiges of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Mother are to be found in the commentaries of the Fathers on the *Sponsa* of the Canticle of Canticles. Indeed, on the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as well as on the other feasts in honor of our Blessed Mother we find the Church in the liturgy employing the words of the Canticle in her prayers of praise, for the bride of the Canticle, adorned with the beauty of spotless purity and deep affection for her spouse, is a figure most appropriate to the Mother of God. Among the typical interpretations to which the Canticle of Canticles lends itself, this interpretation of the most beloved spouse as the Blessed

Virgin Mary is one which has been employed from antiquity, and which, according to the Doctors of the Church and students of Sacred Scripture, is most fitting.

Prior to the twelfth century, however, we find no systematic or complete treatment of the Canticle from a purely Mariological point of view, though many Fathers, among whom we find Saints Hippolytus, Ephraem, Gregory of Nyssa, Peter Chrysologus, John Damascene, and especially Ambrose, associate certain phrases of the Canticle with the Blessed Virgin. Saint Epiphanius, in one of his homilies, refers to the Blessed Mother in connection with the phrase *a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up* (Cant. 4:12). And Saint Theodotus of Ancyra associates the Blessed Virgin with the preceding verse (Cant. 4: II).

There are innumerable passages in the Canticle of Canticles which the Fathers apply to the *Singula Anima Fidelis* or adoring soul. It would hardly be rash to assume that this application by the Fathers of certain texts to the *Singula Anima Fidelis* in any way excludes their being applied also in many cases to our Blessed Lady who, in fact, is the most perfect of all souls and the most worthy to be called the spouse of the Bridegroom.

The Holy Father implies, however, that the Fathers in commenting on the Canticle of Canticles have found in the inspired book cause for observations which have served as the remote foundation for the devotion to the Immaculate Heart itself, and upon investigation we find in the Canticle two special texts which are particularly associated with the Heart of the Beloved: *"I sleep, and my heart watcheth: the voice of my beloved knocking: Open to me my sister, my love, my undefiled* (5:2); and *Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon the arm . . .* (8:6).

The Fathers and early ecclesiastical writers in their commentaries on the above verses sometimes give us an insight into the qualities of the heart of the Beloved Bride. Commenting on the words of the Canticle (5:2), Saint Isidore of Seville says, "Open to me, that is, reveal to me thy heart, my sister, my undented, because you alone are worthy of my sight." Alanus de Insulis uses the verse (Cant. 5:2) as referring to the words of the Blessed Virgin before the Incarnation. *I sleep* refers to the Holy Virgin's freedom from worldly anxieties; *and my heart watcheth* has reference to her contemplation of divine things.

Commenting on the Canticle (8:6), he says that the Virgin Mary so carried Christ as a seal on her heart that through imitation of Him she came more and more to resemble Him, and on the words . . . *he set in order charity in me* (Cant. 2:4), "In whom was charity formed, if not in the Virgin Mary; who loved Christ from the depths of her heart. . . ."

It is the Blessed Virgin again who above all others most perfectly fills the requirements implied, according to the Fathers, in the words, *Put me as a seal upon thy heart* (Cant. 8:6), for it is she who bears Christ as a seal that she might forever love Him, that she might excel in the power of contemplation, and while devoting herself ardently to meditation, might never cease to imitate Him in her external actions. Origen says that the last-mentioned verse of the Canticle (Cant. 8:6) refers to the exhortation of the Bridegroom, that every thought and action of His Beloved be fashioned according to His example. This assimilation to Christ is of course attained by no soul to the extent realized in the person of the Blessed Virgin. It is she who could say *my heart watcheth*, for most ardently did she strive to imitate the Heart of her divine Son and thereby live in perfect obedience to God's holy will. It is she who more than all others has placed Christ as a *seal upon her heart*. As

Christ is the perfect image of the Father, so Mary is humanity's best image of the Son, and since internally and externally no created soul has so perfectly resembled the Source of all Grace, we are not surprised to see in the commentaries of the Fathers on the sublime Canticle, the vestiges of the devotion to that Heart which pre-eminently loved Christ, and which in charity resembled His divine Heart most closely.

Besides the Canticle of Canticles wherein Mary is understood as "the Bride," we find numerous other texts in the Old Testament which the Church and theologians and Scripture scholars have applied to the Blessed Mother. Many texts in their reference to Mary are controversial; many others are without question applicable to her. She appears as "the Sanctuary" in the Psalms, as the "first-born daughter of God" and "heavenly Queen of the World" in the Book of Wisdom.

The liturgy of the Church applies the "Wisdom personified" in the Sapiential books to Mary, which application has been traditional in the Church since the time of the Fathers. Over and above these more explicit applications of Old Testament texts to the Blessed Mother we have the numerous prototypes of Mary and the many texts in connection with them.

In the Psalms also we find innumerable references, some of which are applied to Mary in an accommodated, others in a typical sense. The liturgy of the new Mass Adeamus for the Universal Feast of the Immaculate Heart employs in the Introit the second verse of Psalm 44: *eructant cor meum verbum bonum: dico ego opera mea regi.*

Thus the inspired writings of the Old Testament are rich in Mariological application, and it is not surprising that even

these sections of Sacred Scripture have been employed in the honor and praise of Mary's Heart.

The New Testament

Apart from the history of the infancy and boyhood of Christ we find in the books of the New Testament comparatively little concerning the Mother of God. It is in the recording of the events of these very days, however, that Saint Luke twice mentions the Heart of our Blessed Mother. First, on occasion of the arrival of the shepherds at Bethlehem, we read where *all who heard marveled at the things told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept in mind all these words, pondering them in her heart* (Luke 2:18-19). And again, upon finding our blessed Lord in the Temple, after which the Holy Family returned to Nazareth, Saint Luke writes that our Blessed Mother, reflecting on what had come to pass and on the words of her Son, *kept all these things carefully in her heart* (Luke 2:51). It is because of these two instances wherein Saint Luke mentions the Heart of Mary that Saint John Eudes can say that the devotion to the virginal Heart of the Mother of God has its origin and foundation in the Holy Gospel itself. The Holy Ghost, he says, through the inspiration of the Evangelist Saint Luke, willed that the Heart of Mary be depicted as the sacred repository and faithful custodian of the ineffable mysteries and treasures contained in the life of our Lord; and explicit mention of the Heart of Mary must have been made, he continues, that men might forever honor her august Heart.¹⁸

We know, however, that though we have in these texts the seeds of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the full and correct concept of what is dogmatically contained in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is scarcely conveyed by the two afore-mentioned verses of Saint Luke and, in fact,

some would trace the origin of the devotion to the words of Simeon (Luke 2:35) which we shall investigate shortly.

It is difficult to ascertain the full import as well as the limitations of Saint Luke's two verses, namely Luke 2:19 and 51; but without a doubt, to interpret as do some authors the use of the word "heart" in these texts as referring simply to the memory of the Blessed Mother is certainly to underestimate the content of the Evangelist's words. The entire Patristic tradition of comment on these verses militates against any such limited understanding of the texts. The Fathers depict Mary's Heart as the receptacle or tabernacle for the divine mysteries and arguments of faith. Today, exegetes interpret Saint Luke's words as expressive of the complexity of the Blessed Mother's interior life, with particular reference to the operation of the intellectual faculties. She retained these words in her Heart, meditating upon them, weighing them, and keeping them that later she might reveal to the Evangelists many things that she alone knew about her divine Son.²⁴ At all events, in view of the comments of the Fathers and exegetes on these important verses of Saint Luke, we cannot fail to recognize that herein is contained a scriptural foundation for that devotion which, along with Tradition, the Liturgy, and all Marian Theology, has brought a special veneration to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God.

It is in Saint Luke's Gospel again that we find recorded another text which centers our attention on Mary's Heart namely, the text containing the words of the aged Simeon to our Blessed Mother: *And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed* (Luke 2:35). It is certainly from this text that one of the most popular representations of the Heart of Mary has been adapted; that of the heart pierced by a sword. Even in Patristic times the sword is understood as piercing the Heart

of Mary. The exact nature of this sword of sorrow in the commentaries of the Fathers is a much-mooted question, but seems universally accepted today as Mary's sorrow in the realization of the division among men concerning her divine Son, and for her this sword is greatest when it pierces her Heart beneath the cross. Here she sought not whatever encouragements and consolations she might have received, but by her deep suffering and compassion she shared more fully in the Passion of her Son. Paradoxically, it was here beneath the Cross that Mary's love for all mankind was, through the will of Christ, augmented in her maternal Heart. She saw beyond the immediate surroundings of Calvary and willingly made the sacrifice of her divine Son that all souls of all ages might through the love of her maternal Heart be born to a new life in God.

Thus we see how the references in Sacred Scripture to Mary's Heart along with the words of Simeon will serve as a basis and foundation for the development of the devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart.

It remains now for us to investigate, in the writings of the Fathers and in the literature left by other early saints and ecclesiastics, the use of the term "Heart of Mary" and the associations connected therewith.

The Fathers

We have seen how references to the Heart of Mary in Sacred Scripture could well serve as a foundation for a consequent development of a devotion to the Immaculate Heart. It is to be noted, however, in connection with the Immaculate Heart, that as in the case of the doctrine of the Assumption with which the Feast of the Immaculate Heart is connected not only liturgically, being celebrated on the Octave Day of that Solemnity, but also dogmatically, as we shall later

explain, we do not look to Sacred Writ for explicit texts depicting the full dogmatic content of this devotion. The seeds of the devotion are certainly contained therein, but to see the germination of what the Scriptures have implanted we must now examine the writings of the Fathers, who with their knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures begin to give us a clarification of what is implicitly contained in the recordings of the Evangelists concerning the Heart of the Blessed Mother. With their clarifications and insights into the texts, they lay an even further foundation for the development of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart.

In the writings of most of the Fathers we find innumerable allusions to the Blessed Virgin; many passages in fact relate especially to her; and yet none of the Fathers treat of the Blessed Virgin *ex professo*. Had not the Fathers of the first four centuries been so occupied with the defense of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the clarification of Christological concepts, we might have received more from them on the various prerogatives of the Blessed Mother. They have, nonetheless, left us sufficient texts for a clarification of her exalted position among men and her close relationship with God. We find in their writings many texts which present a further foundation for those doctrines which logically and naturally led to the special devotion to the Immaculate Heart, and a few texts which pertain to the Immaculate Heart itself.

There are innumerable references to the mind and interior life of the Blessed Virgin, and to her sanctity; and though often many of these texts have a direct relationship to the object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, at present we will concern ourselves with only the passages wherein the Fathers actually use the word *cor*.

We cannot expect to find in Patristic times the use of the word in the full and exact sense or understanding with which it is employed today; yet many of the texts have a direct bearing on the present-day devotion in that they have greatly influenced the saints and theologians of later centuries through whom the clarification and promulgation of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart has been effected.

A goodly number of the Fathers make some mention of the Heart of Mary; most of them mention it in connection with the references to her Heart in Sacred Scripture, some of which texts we have already seen. A few Fathers refer to it in relation to her person or her prerogatives.

The majority of the Patristic texts can perhaps best be divided, for the main part, into those referring to Mary at the time of the Annunciation, and to Mary standing at the foot of the cross.

In connection with the Annunciation and Incarnation of our Lord, Saint Augustine speaks of the Heart of Mary as playing a definite role in the conception of the Word Incarnate. He regards the Blessed Mother as having formed and carried Christ in her heart prior to her conceiving Him in her womb.³⁵ It is these very words of Saint Augustine which Saint Thomas later uses to show the congruity of the Annunciation to Mary prior to her consent and the Incarnation.

The conception of Christ in the Heart of Mary is of course used figuratively, not literally (*proprie*); but figuratively with a foundation in the sense that, prior to receiving the Incarnate Word in her womb, Mary had first to conceive Him in faith and spirit, which mental and spiritual orientation is symbolized by her Heart. It is with this understanding that the liturgy on the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord uses

the phrase *Confirmatum est cor Virginis, in quo dimna mysteria, angelo nuntiante, concepit.*

This figurative usage of the word "heart" employed by Saint Augustine and the liturgy emphasizes, among other things, the psychological preparation of Mary for the conception of the Word Incarnate. The fact that the Incarnation was brought about in a marvelously miraculous manner ought not to obscure the role of Divine Providence in fittingly preparing Mary for the conception of Christ. Hence it is not unusual that the word "heart" should be employed by the Fathers in a nonliteral sense to refer to this psychological preparation, and it occurs therefore in texts referring to the Annunciation.

In connection with the Blessed Mother at the foot of the cross, the Fathers again make mention of her Immaculate Heart. In their comments on Simeon's prophecy of the sword of sorrow (Luke 2:35) we have already seen some of these references. In considering the Blessed Mother as actually beneath the cross on Calvary, it is her Heart which the Fathers have singled out as the most significant and symbolical indication, firstly, of Mary's sorrow and, ultimately and basically, of her interior sanctity and love.

We shall see shortly how this tradition of associating the Heart of the Blessed Mother with the evidences of her suffering and her love for God and man on Calvary is carried on in the writings of the saints and theologians of succeeding centuries. Apart from these instances of the Annunciation and Calvary the Fathers occasionally make allusions to the Heart of Mary in various figurative ways, and in connection with one or the other of her prerogatives. Nowhere, however, do the Fathers give us any elaborate or detailed insight into what we regard today as the theology of the Immaculate Heart. Nor do they explicitly indicate any

particular devotion directed toward the Heart of the Blessed Mother. It is evident, nonetheless, in the above excerpts from their writings that even in the earliest centuries of doctrinal development Patristic literature has laid the foundation for what centuries later, especially through the zeal and instrumentality of Saint John Eudes, has become the great devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Early Ecclesiastical Writers

In the centuries following the Patristic era up to the time of the great Saint Bernard in whose writings, according to some, we see the first traces of a devotion directed especially toward the Heart of Mary, we find but few allusions to the Heart of the Blessed Mother. Saint Ildephonse mentions the Heart of Mary in a sermon on the Assumption. But it seems it is not until just prior to Saint Bernard that we have writings which again mention the Heart of Mary in any way repeatedly. There is reference to her heart in connection with her joys and sorrows and in a work often attributed to Saint Anselm but quite certainly written by his disciple Eadmer, there is one instance where the author seems to associate the Immaculate Heart with Mary's role as Coredemptrix. For the most part, however, in these centuries we have but little reference to the Heart of the Mother of God. Certainly we have still no traces of a special devotion to her Heart, but we do have carried on in tradition the seeds of the devotion which were present in the Scriptures, and which soon through the instrumentality of Saint Bernard, and later through Saint Bernardine of Siena, and then especially through Saint John Eudes, grew into the marvelous devotion of the Immaculate Heart.

Subsequent Pre-Public Cult

As we advance in our observations down through the centuries we see that ascetical writers and theologians come more and more to associate the perfections of the Blessed Mother with her Immaculate Heart. The various references and allusions come to a quick crescendo in the writings of Saint Bernard, and with his advent there is noticeable a widespread awareness of the particular importance of the Heart of the Blessed Mother, as well as the more definite beginnings of a devotion to the Immaculate Heart itself. In the years following Saint Bernard we see the inception of the theological determination of the place of the Immaculate Heart in the schema of hyperdulia.

Not at all in the literary testimony of the saints and ecclesiastical writers of the middle centuries do we find any express treatise on the Heart of Mary, but we do find authors carrying on the earlier tradition of associating the Heart of the Blessed Mother with her consent at the time of the Annunciation, and also the tradition of associating the Heart of Mary with her sufferings and compassion with Christ, the roots of which tradition lie, as we have seen, in the prophecy of Simeon. But along with these associations we find in Saint Bernard and after him a further development and elaboration, namely, the associating of the Heart of Mary with the virtues, first of faith, then of charity. It is at this time that we see the first and early formation of the concepts which have resulted in the true and precise understanding of the object of the veneration of the Immaculate Heart.

It will perhaps be clearest, and not out of keeping with our chronological procedure, to consider then the testimonies from these centuries grouped under the above headings: the Immaculate Heart in relation to the consent at the Annunciation, and the Immaculate Heart in Mary's sufferings, especially on Calvary. The outgrowth of this first relationship is the association of the Heart of Mary with the

virtue of faith; and the outgrowth of the second consideration is the association of the charity and sanctity of Mary's Heart with her love for God and man.

Especially in these centuries preceding Saint John Eudes we find an abundance of material connecting the Heart of Mary with her consent at the Annunciation. Just prior to Saint Bernard this early tradition of Saint Augustine is carried on by Saint Bruno de Segni and Pope Innocent III, who speak of the Word Incarnate as being received in the Heart of the Blessed Mother. Contemporaneous with Saint Bernard, Gueric, abbot of Igny, very beautifully reiterates this identical notion, and in the ensuing four centuries we have many further elaborations on the Heart of the Virgin at the Annunciation. The great Saint Albert, who wrote extensively on the consent of the Blessed Mother, also mentions her most holy Heart in connection with the Word Incarnate. In a similar manner, Saint Thomas in his *Catena Aurea* remarks that from the time of the Incarnation Mary conceived and fostered in her Heart the meaning of her association with her divine Son.

Saint Bernard himself, Richard of Saint Lawrence, and Saint Bonaventure associate the consent of the virginal Heart of Mary with the virtue of faith. From the faith which adorned her Heart there proceeded the *Fiat* of consent.

We find also in this period numerous references to the Heart of Mary in connection with the sufferings of the Blessed Mother, especially on Calvary. The Heart of the Blessed Virgin is depicted as the mirror of the Passion of Christ, suffering with Him. In his sermons on the Assumption, Saint Thomas of Villanova frequently makes references to the virginal Heart of Mary as united with her suffering Son.

It is with Saint Bernard, however, that we see the first direct association of the Immaculate Heart with the virtue of charity, and it is in his writings also, that according to some, we find the first real evidence of a particular devotion to the Immaculate Heart itself. Saint Bernard writes in connection with the charity of the Heart of Mary, that an arrow of love pierced her Heart, that with all her powers of heart and soul she might love God and man and become the mother of charity. And again: as Christ died in body, so she died in heart, thereby alone among all creatures possessing a charity approaching that of her divine Son. We find expressed an ardent love and a special devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart in the following words of a sermon sometimes attributed to the great saint: "Open, oh Mother of Mercy, the portals of thy most generous Heart to the longing prayers of the sons of Adam. . . . It is no wonder, Oh Lady, that the abundant mercy of thy Heart is a place of solace, since the ineffable work of mercy which God predestined for our redemption was first formed by the architect of the world in you." Contemporaneous with Saint Bernard, Hugh of Saint Victor also writes explaining the love of the Blessed Virgin and its role in the Incarnation.

We have a clear indication, following Saint Bernard, of a special devotion to the Heart of Mary in Richard of Saint Lawrence, penitentiary of Rouen, in the beautiful tribute to our Lady, *De Laudibus B. Mariae Virg.*, if this tract can be attributed to him. In this work the Heart of Mary is depicted as the source of salvation, the first of all hearts united with Christ in His sufferings, and the abode of the Holy Trinity. The author particularly associates Mary's love of God with her virginal Heart.

In the years following these men, through the first decades of the thirteenth century, mention must be made of other early apostles who did much to promulgate the growing

devotion. One of the earliest devotees of the veneration of our Blessed Mother's Heart was the Blessed Herman of Friesach, one of St. Dominic's early followers who daily saluted the Heart of Mary; another was the Venerable Herman Joseph of the Praemonstratensian Order, who had formulated a kind of consecration to Mary's Heart.

A special mention must also be made of Saint Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor, whose influence and spirituality confirmed and gave impetus in later years to the growing devotion. It is he who carries on and develops Saint Bernard's early and correct notion of associating Mary's Heart with her sanctity and her extraordinary charity. In the work *Stimulus Amoris*, for many centuries attributed to Saint Bonaventure, we find reference to the sorrowful Heart of Mary and scattered indications of a devotion to her virginal Heart.

Contemporaneous with Saint Bonaventure in the middle and late thirteenth century, another who figures in the history of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is Conrad of Saxony, whose work, *Speculum beatae Mariae Virginis*, was for many centuries attributed to Saint Bonaventure. At this time there lived also the great women, Saints Mechtilde and Gertrude, followed later by Saint Brigid of Sweden, whose private revelations concerning the Immaculate Heart we will mention shortly under a separate heading.

In the following ages we must note Saint Antoninus, Saint Lawrence Justinian, John Gerson, Ernest Pragensis, and Nicholas of Salicetus, in whose *Antidotarium* one finds evidences of devotional practices to the Heart of Mary. In these years also it was Saint Bernardine of Siena who in an exceptional manner discovered and understood the significance and nature of Mary's Immaculate Heart. Because of his writings he has often been called the "Doctor

of the Immaculate Heart of Mary," and it is from him that we receive the three lessons of the second nocturn of the Office for the Feast of the Immaculate Heart. Especially in his sermons do we find traces of the great saint's devotion to Mary's virginal Heart. In them he exalts the perfection of the corporeal heart of Mary as the symbol of her love for God and mankind, but further as the symbol of her purity, humility, and 'sanctity. He writes that the dignity of becoming the Mother of God was the greatest destiny possible for any creature, and "therefore, in a most sublime fashion, the foreordaining love of God penetrated and moved the Heart of the Virgin to this work" this work which "participated most deeply in the perfection, influence, and divine-likeness of the foreordaining love of God from which it sprang." And again: "Who among pure creatures can be imagined better than she who merited to become the Mother of God, and who carried God Himself as her guest in her Heart and in her womb? . . . What better treasure is there than that of Divine love itself of which the Heart of the Virgin was the fiery furnace?" And further: "Therefore, from this heart as from a furnace of Divine Love the Blessed Virgin brought forth good words, that is, words of burning charity." Thus Saint Bernardine associates the Heart of the Blessed Mother with her deep charity and great love for God and man.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century we have evidence of further devotional practices in regard to the Immaculate Heart. Julius II, the great Renaissance Pope, promulgated certain invocations to the Immaculate Heart to be recited at the sound of the Angelus. In the same century mention ought to be made of the Carthusian, Lanspergus, in whose Pharetra one also finds traces of a devotion to the Heart of Mary. Other writers of this period worthy of note are Cornelius a Lapide, Saint Peter Canisius, Louis de Blois, Saint Philip Neri, and the Spanish Dominican Luis de Granada.

Special mention must be made of Saint Francis de Sales who was a connecting link between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and one of the greater lights, the immediate predecessor of Saint John Eudes. In his writings we find a synthesis of what had developed up to his day. He speaks of the perfections of the Heart of Mary, the model of love for God, and dedicated to it his Theotimus. In the crest of the Visitation order which he founded, he placed the Hearts of Jesus and Mary together. And it was he who played a principal role in influencing the work of Saint John Elides an acknowledgment which the great Apostle of the Immaculate Heart makes often in his writings.

Others, just prior to Saint John Eudes, who ought to be mentioned for their writings or devotion to the Immaculate Heart, are: Suarez; Saint Robert Bellarmine; P. Poire; Cardinal De Berulle; J. De La Cerda; Bartholomew de Los Rios; J. Olier, the founder of the Sulpicians; P. Barry; and V. Contenson. Saint John Eudes mentions, as other apostles of Mary's incomparable Heart, Orsius, Sebastian, Baradius, John Eusebius of Nieremberg, John Baptist Saint Jure, Stephen Binet, Christopher de Vega, and Honorat Nicquet.

However, neither in the writings of the afore-mentioned authors nor in other Mariological literature prior to Saint John Eudes, do we find any treatise directly and expressly dealing with the devotion to the Immaculate Heart. We do see, however, a constant growth of associated references and an awareness of the distinctive role the virginal Heart of Mary had been predestined to play in the salvation of souls and in the whole divine economy. The fixed terms in regard to the devotion were still to be determined, and the devotion was still private in nature; but an increase in references and testimony concerning Mary's Immaculate Heart is definitely observed.

Before we investigate the writings of the great Saint John Eudes in whom the devotion to the Immaculate Heart found its most ardent advocate, and who was the first to institute and propagate the liturgical worship of the Heart of Mary, we shall note briefly, as we indicated earlier, some of the private revelations to various saints concerning the Immaculate Heart, revelations with which Saint John Eudes was himself acquainted.

In Private Revelation

The entire Christian world is cognizant of the role played by Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque in promoting the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and although the Feast of the Sacred Heart was approved for reasons quite apart from the saint's private revelations, yet without a doubt her great influence in this matter was largely due to the revelations our Lord deigned to grant her. There is not a perfect parallel in regard to the development of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but in the earliest centuries of the devotion, and even in our own day, we learn of private revelations concerning the most pure Heart of Mary given to certain chosen souls.

Private revelations, as extraordinary mystical phenomena, belong to the intellectual order of extraordinary divine phenomena, and are made to private individuals for their own welfare or that of others. Indirectly, under certain circumstances, they can, like public revelations, pertain to the welfare of the whole Church. Under no circumstances, however, can these revelations form a part of Catholic faith, and hence the faithful are not obliged to accept them on divine faith. Even when the Church approves them they do not become part of the object of Catholic faith, but are promulgated simply for the instruction and edification of the faithful. The assent they are accorded, therefore, is not an

act of Catholic faith, but of human faith only, based on the fact that the revelations are credible and published with ecclesiastical approval. Even in these cases the faithful are cautioned to be prudent, for it is quite possible that a private revelation true in the main part may contain incidental errors, such as historical and scientific inaccuracies. The Church approves private revelations only after long and careful investigation and even then the faithful are not commanded to accept them. The matter itself, with its ramifications in dogma and matters liturgical, is thoroughly investigated long before any ecclesiastical pronouncement is made. Ecclesiastical approbation in its turn guarantees only that the revelations are plausible and not to be condemned, and the Church declares simply that approved revelations contain nothing against faith and morals and can prudently, piously, and without superstition be believed on human faith.

Thus, without overemphasizing the importance of private revelation, we look briefly at the revelations granted certain saints. True, these revelations cannot be considered to have played any role in the clarification of the dogmatic implications connected with the Immaculate Heart, but inasmuch as they have helped further the devotion to the Heart of the Mother of God, we will consider the more important of them briefly.

Saint Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (ob. 1170), had a special devotion to the joys of the Heart of Mary, and our Lady is said to have appeared to him and revealed her desire to help others who practiced this devotion, especially at the hour of death.

We note also in passing the apparition of the Blessed Virgin (15 August 1233) to the seven founders of the Servite Order which led to the veneration of our Blessed Lady as the

Mother of Sorrows. In connection with this devotion and stemming from the image naturally conveyed by the words of Simeon recorded in Holy Scripture, an impetus was given to the veneration of the Blessed Mother with a special view to her charity as symbolized by her Heart.

Among the earliest and most famous private revelations are those granted the Benedictine nun, Saint Mechtilde (ob. 1298). It is especially in the first two parts of her *Book of Special Grace* that we find, more than in any saint or writer before her, tangible and evident expressions of a devotion to the Heart of Mary. Our Lord is understood to have revealed to her several reasons why it was granted that she honor the Heart of the Blessed Virgin in a special way: on account of the desire of the Heart of Mary for the coming of Christ; on account of her Heart's humility and its love for the Infant Jesus; on account of the care with which it treasured the words of Christ, the prayers it offered and the zeal and interest it had for the Church; and because of its role in heaven, that of a Heart replete with heavenly grace, inflamed with love for God and man.

In the same convent with Saint Mechtilde, and doubtlessly inspired by her in many ways, another saint given special graces by God and the extraordinary privilege of private revelations was Saint Gertrude the Great (ob. 1302). Throughout her writings we find indications of her great devotion to Mary's most holy Heart, for like Saint Mechtilde, she speaks of it with some frequency.

In the following century God again raised up a saint similar to Saints Mechtilde and Gertrude: Saint Brigid of Sweden (ob. 1373). She too was destined to receive private revelations concerning the virginal Heart of the Mother of God and to play a role in furthering the devotion. We read in her Revelations the words of Mary: "When He suffered, I felt

as though my Heart endured the sufferings also . . . when my Son was scourged and torn with whips, my Heart was scourged and whipped with him . . . His Heart was my Heart ... so that my beloved Son and myself redeemed the world as with one Heart."

The above are the most celebrated instances of early private revelation in connection with the Heart of Mary and are those which have been an influence in the early spread of the devotion. However, we read of other similar incidents in the middle ages and in modern times, some of which are not without great significance.

If for no other reason, the early private revelations noted above merit mention because of their influence on Saint John Eudes, who in the seventeenth century initiated the devotion to Mary's Heart as a public one? and figured strongly in bringing liturgical worship to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

By our observations to this point concerning the scriptural texts mentioned, the writings of the Fathers and later Ecclesiastics, and private revelations, we have seen that recourse to Mary under the symbol of her Heart was not an exceptional thing before Saint John Eudes, but it was always an isolated and private manifestation of devotion. There was as yet in regard to the devotion no authoritative voice, no pontifical declaration, no liturgical celebration; and although the devotion already knew certain developments, it was not until the seventeenth century with Saint John Eudes that the first clarifications of the object of the devotion and a discussion of its foundations were brought to light.

In Public Cult

We have considered the vestiges, early traces, and later real evidences of private devotion to the Immaculate Heart. We now turn to the later era of public veneration, first in a restricted manner, and then in the full universally approved worship of the Church. Indeed, with Saint John Eudes (1601-1680) the devotion was made public and received ecclesiastical approbation, but it was for a time limited to specific locales and was only in later decades to be accepted and popularized throughout the universal Church. With Saint John's efforts came the liturgical veneration of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, and since his day the science of the liturgy has played an outstanding role in connection with the devotion.

Hence, since the seventeenth century there can be added, beyond the authority of the Fathers and theologians of the Church, the arguments of the liturgy proving the place in Marian veneration of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart for "*legem credendi supplicandi lex statuatur*."⁸⁸ With the intimate connection between sacred liturgy and dogma it is to be expected that, as the devotion to Mary's Heart grew, so too do we find a clarification of the nature and dogmatic foundations of the devotion. The liturgy does not become a proving ground for the devotion in the sense that the Church is later obligated to declare a devotion acceptable and with true dogmatic basis when it is adjudged to have produced evidences of sanctity among the faithful through its liturgical aspects. Rather the liturgy of the Church has the Catholic faith for its content and bears public witness to the faith of the Church. It is in this sense that the Sovereign Pontiff and Councils of the Church have called upon the sacred liturgy along with other theological sources to clarify divine revelation. In the case of the Immaculate Heart then, the liturgy does not determine independently and in its own right the status and foundations for this devotion; but inasmuch as it is a profession of eternal truths and always

subject to the teaching authority of the Church it can contribute, and de facto has contributed, toward determining the precise scope and nature of this particular phase of Marian veneration; and it has greatly enriched an already humanly appealing devotion.

Liturgical Cult

It is most appropriate to note that the Church in the course of the process of beatification and canonization of Saint John Eudes has emphasized his role in establishing the liturgical devotion to Mary's Heart. In the brief of beatification we read that he, not without divine guidance, rendered Mary's Heart liturgical veneration, and should be regarded as the Father, Doctor, and Apostle of this devotion.⁹⁰ In considering especially the growth of the devotion, Saint John Eudes is without question the outstanding personality in its history and the great precursor of public veneration.⁹¹ It was he who as a theologian first explained the reasons for the devotion, and later had the feast established both in his own Congregations and with episcopal approval in certain French dioceses. In 1641 he composed his special Office and Mass. In the year 1680 he completed his famous work, *Le Coeur Admirable*, consisting of 12 books, characterized by sound theology and deep piety, the first complete work to be published on the devotion.

With all deference to the received opinion, we note in passing that prior to Saint John Eudes we have evidences of public cult being offered to a certain extent to the Heart of Mary by the Dominican Fathers Ignatius de Nente (1642) and Anthony Barbieux (1661) and by Father Vincent Guinigi of the Clerics Regular of the Mother of God. Their work, however, was limited in scope and Saint John Eudes has always been considered, even prior to the statement of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, the precursor of the devotion, making

this apostolate a goal of his entire life. He labored to give the devotion real stability, worked for ecclesiastical approbation, and instilled in his followers the desire to see the devotion come into its own.

He based his theological opinions in this matter on Sacred Scripture and began to clarify terms by distinguishing between what he called the corporeal, the spiritual, and the Divine Heart of Mary. In the saint's mind, the corporeal heart was the physical heart of Mary's body; the spiritual heart, her soul; sanctified not as Christ's Heart through the hypostatic union, but through her eminent participation in the divine perfections; and the Divine Heart was the term he used to express the union between Mother and Son, a union of such intimate nature that the Mother and Son might be spoken of as having but one Heart. This last concept was a favorite idea of the saint's, and rightly understood can indeed be included on the immediate object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, albeit the devotion concerns Mary herself, and cannot have as its object anything other than what belongs properly to her person.

Beyond the ordinary saint who might say, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20), from the very inception of Mary's existence she lived always in the unitive way, most intimately associated with the Godhead. The nature of this transforming union could very well prompt Saint John Eudes to say, "Jesus lives in her (Mary's) soul and body. . . . His Heart abides in her Heart, His soul in her soul. . . . His virtues, mysteries, and divine attributes are living in her Heart. . . ,"

Certainly after the hypostatic union there is no other union closer than that of the Heart of Jesus with the Heart of His Mother, but this close association and the full import of the "Divine Heart of Mary" is best seen and understood by saints

and theologians such as Saint John Eudes. Without perfectly understanding the full content of the "Divine Heart," however, we can safely include some of the ideas associated with it in the immediate object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, always realizing that they belong properly to the person of Mary. Insofar, however, as Saint John Eudes by the "Divine Heart" meant the Heart of Jesus living in Mary, it cannot be included in the immediate object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart.

Regardless of a limitation in the complete acceptance of Saint John's ideas on the Divine Heart and much of his purely devotional writings in connection with the Heart of Mary, we still recognize in his efforts the major single influence in the theological history of the devotion. It was certainly from this great saint that two other outstanding early apostles of the devotion, Father Gallifet, S.J., and Father Pinamonti, S.J., received their inspiration.

As early as 1644 Saint John Eudes wished to observe the Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary as the patronal feast of his congregations of priests and nuns; he celebrated it on the twentieth of October. The first public feast in honor of the Heart of Mary was celebrated in Autun in 1648, the result of the saint's efforts and with episcopal approval. The Holy See, when petitioned in 1669, refused approbation of this Office and Mass. However, by this time many French bishops, according to custom and what was then considered within episcopal rights, were allowing the feast to be celebrated in their dioceses on February 8.

By 1672 the feast was celebrated more or less throughout all France. In 1729 the Holy See when petitioned again refused official approbation of the proposed Office and Mass, although the Papal Legate to France had approved an office as early as 1668. Somewhat later, in 1773, a proper office for

the first time received papal approval; this by Pope Clement XIV. The feast received further papal approbation when Pope Pius VI, in 1787, permitted the nuns of Notre Dame de Corbeil to celebrate the Feast of the "Most Holy Heart of Mary" as a double of the first class on the twentysecond of August. In 1799 the same Pontiff conceded the feast to some churches of the diocese of Palermo.

It was not until 1805 that a general papal approbation was granted. Pope Pius VII gave the faculty for the celebration of the Feast of the "Most Pure Heart of Mary" on the Sunday after the Octave of the Assumption to all dioceses and religious institutes which asked for it. In 1855 under Pope Pius IX a complete proper Office and Mass for this feast was approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The Office of Saint John Eudes universally used in France for over a hundred years was finally approved for the Eudists in 1861." The Office which we find in the Appendix of the old Roman Breviary was granted in the year 1857.

In the ensuing years we see the liturgical cult gaining popularity, due partially to the success of the cause with which it was in earlier decades united that of the Sacred Heart. But it was a number of years later and due to various influences that the Office and Feast of the Immaculate Heart received full acknowledgment, for finally Pope Pius XII in 1944; to commemorate the special solemn consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 8 December 1942, extended the feast to the whole world, to be celebrated with a special Office and Mass on the twenty-second of August as a double of the second class. It was decided that the Office and Mass approved by Pius IX would not be suitable for a feast of this rite extended to the universal Church since there were already some secondary feasts of the Blessed Virgin, e.g., the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Feast of the Seven Dolors, which had fully

proper Offices and Masses. Hence from the Office of the Most Pure Heart of Mary the only parts retained were the antiphon to the Magnificat, the oration with the word Immaculati replacing the word Purissimi, and the Fourth and Fifth Lessons of the Second Nocturn taken from a sermon by Saint Bernardine of Siena. In the Missal an almost completely new text was prepared. The new Office and Mass therefore give a new orientation to the cult of the Immaculate Heart. It is of interest to note that the Gospel, in emphasizing the love of the Immaculate Heart for mankind, stresses a point on which in earlier years there had been some difference of opinion.

Where by special indult the Feast of the Most Pure Heart was already celebrated, the new Mass should now be used. Even where the Mass of the Most Pure Heart was already granted by special indult as a votive Mass, the new Mass replaces it.

Nonliturgical Cult

With the incorporation of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart into the liturgy there followed quite naturally many instances of religious confraternities, congregations, and societies dedicating themselves to the service of God and the honor of Mary under the title of the Most Pure or Immaculate Heart. In 1648 Saint John Eudes himself founded several confraternities in honor of Mary's Heart. In 1654 the House of Refuge at Dijon was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Mary. In 1666 Alexander VII approved the Confraternity of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary erected in the city of Morlaix. The first church dedicated to the Heart of Jesus, that of the Seminary of Coutances in Normandy (1672), was at the same time jointly dedicated to the Heart of Mary.

In the years 1674 and 1675 Saint John Eudes, in favor of his confraternities, obtained six bulls from Pope Clement X

solemnly authorizing devotion to the admirable Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. During the years 1668 to 1805 there sprang up everywhere confraternities of the Heart of Mary and of the Sacred Hearts, approved and indulgenced by the Sovereign Pontiffs.

The scapular of the Immaculate Heart was approved in 1877, and that of the Sacred Hearts in 1900. The first Saturday devotion was indulgenced by Pope Pius X in 1912.

From 1703 to 1924 we have evidence of at least 8 religious congregations of men and 30 of women under some title of the Heart of Mary. These include, after the Eudists, the congregation founded by the Venerable Libermann in 1843, four years later amalgamated with the Holy Ghost Fathers; and the Picpus Fathers, the Congregation of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, founded in the year 1805. In 1849 Saint Antonio Maria Claret founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This Congregation, approved definitively by Pope Pius IX in 1870, has done much to foster devotion to Mary's Heart.

In the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century we have instances of local and limited consecration of individuals, families, and dioceses to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but these consecrations were in no way universal. Hence in 1942 the devotion received a great impetus in the action of the Holy Father, Pius XII, who on October 31 of that year consecrated the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This consecration was solemnly renewed at Saint Peter's on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in the following December, not as a spontaneous act, but as the consequence of historical developments of high moral significance. The Holy Father's action was the crowning of a vast movement of souls springing from a heritage of no few

years and showing the highest of tributes to our Lady on the part of the Church.

As we mentioned, it was in order to keep alive and meaningful in the minds of the faithful the import of this solemn consecration, that Pope Pius XII extended the feast of the Immaculate Heart to the whole Church to be celebrated on the Octave Day of the Assumption.

After a consideration of the meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we will see more clearly the profound implications of this consecration and the importance of the institution of the feast in our own day.

Chapter 2 - The Object of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart

Preliminary Notes

Before proceeding to any detailed discussion of the object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart it will be well to clarify what is meant in our title by the term "devotion."

Saint Thomas in the Secunda Secundae of the Summa considers the particular means whereby man attains his ultimate end. This he does through a consideration especially of the theological and cardinal virtues. The second cardinal virtue which he treats is justice, and as its first potential part he assigns the virtue of religion. His Question on devotion is the first of several dealing with the acts of this latter virtue.

According to Saint Thomas, then, annexed to the cardinal virtue of justice as one of its potential parts is the virtue of religion that high moral virtue which inclines man to show due cult to God as the first principle of all things. The virtue of religion has as its material object, divine cult or worship; and as its chief interior act, that of devotion.

In our ordinary manner of speaking, to both "cult" and "devotion" we attribute several meanings, some synonymous, some quite different. Cult is defined as worship, or a system of worship; as great devotion, and homage. Devotion is defined as a state or quality or act of religiousness. In the theological field, although we find that both words have more specific meanings, especially by some modern authors, they are again at times used interchangeably.

In general, cult may be denned as the manifestation of submission and acknowledgment of dependence shown toward the excellence of another; or, according to Saint John Damascene's classical definition, "subiectionis argumentum . . . hoc est, demissionis et humiliationis, obsequii et reverentiae signum."

In the concept of cult there are to be considered two elements, the material and the formal. Considered materially, cult means any deferential act, external or internal, which we perform in recognition of another person's excellence to excite in ourselves or others the esteem we ought to have for this excellence; considered formally, it means the esteem itself due such excellence.

Ordinarily understood, cult implies three acts: intellectual recognition of another's excellence, voluntary submission, and an act expressing this recognition and submission. If this cult is offered to a person whose excellence is uncreated, it is called latria; if to a person whose excellence is created, *dulia communiter sumpta*. If, however, this created excellence is altogether and entirely singular, the cult offered is called *hyperdulia*.

Cult is absolute, if rendered to an object because of that object's own excellence; relative, if offered because of the excellence of another object morally connected with the former object. Cult may be internal or external, private or public. We speak also of cult being either civil or religious.

Devotion, on the other hand, is considered by Saint Thomas as a special act of volition: ". . . devotion seems to be nothing more than the will to dedicate oneself promptly to whatever pertains to the service of God." And again: "an act of the will of man offering himself to God to serve Him." Following Saint Thomas' clarifications, devotion, generally

understood, is the first act of the virtue of religion, and ought to be considered in a wider sense than divine cult, for it includes something more than such cult, namely the will to recognize promptly, with alacrity and eagerness, the excellence of the Supreme Being. Devotion always implies a relationship to cult, for inasmuch as it adds something to cult it necessarily connotes cult. Cult, on the other hand, need not necessarily imply devotion; one can give even divine cult without possessing any interior promptitude or readiness to do so. Devotion perfects and gives a certain value to cult, for cult without devotion appears as a somewhat incomplete thing.

Devotion is indeed an act of the virtue of religion. Participating in the virtue of religion, however, is the virtue of supernatural *dulia* and consequently that of *hyperdulia*. Accordingly the devotion we manifest toward our Lady, though immediately elicited by *hyperdulia*, does not for that reason fail to participate in the nature of that devotion which is the act of the virtue of religion. Saint Thomas remarks in considering this very difficulty that the devotion one has to God's saints does not terminate in them, but reaches even to God, insofar as we honor God in the servants of God.

In reference to Mary's Immaculate Heart we will use both terms, "cult" and "devotion." By "cult" we especially mean the manifestation of our humble recognition of the excellence of the Immaculate Heart and ultimately, as we shall see, of our Lady herself. This phrase, "cult of the Immaculate Heart," is meant to focus attention on the right of our Lady's Immaculate Heart to a special veneration. By the term "devotion," on the other hand, we understand the proneness and promptitude we should exhibit in venerating Mary's Immaculate Heart. Thus, in the phrase "devotion to the Immaculate Heart" we emphasize not simply the

proffering of acts of honor and reverence, but precisely our eagerness, promptitude, and even delight in rendering these actions. We include also the concept contained in the derived sense of the term "devotion" namely, the habitual intention of offering this cult.

The Cult of Hyperdulia

The ideas of cult and devotion, inasmuch as they are relative terms will be fully understood only after a study of the object involved; and this we shall undertake with some preliminary observations on the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary in general.

As we have already implied, the veneration we show the angels and saints as specially endowed creatures is technically called supernatural dulia.²⁰ This dulia is distinguished from latria, the worship we owe God, not etymologically, but according to universal theological usage. What concerns us presently is whether the cult we offer the Blessed Mother, the cult which we refer to as hyperdulia,[^] is essentially (i.e., specifically) different, or only different in degree, from that which we offer the angels and saints.

Saint Thomas says that the virtue of dulia may be viewed widely (*dulia communiter sumpta*), as the reverence anyone shows another person because of the latter's excellence. Thus taken broadly, dulia contains within its scope "*pietas*," "*observantia*," and other such virtues. And these are specifically different virtues.

Saint Thomas concludes further that among the species of dulia "*communiter sumpta*" hyperdulia is the highest. Following the Angelic Doctor's reasoning, all but a few theologians today regard hyperdulia as differing from the

dulia we offer the angels and saints not simply in degree, but in kind.

Since the formal object of every act of religious cult is the supernatural dignity, excellence, or perfection of the persons venerated or worshiped, we distinguish different kinds and degrees of cult according to the various species or degrees of perfection inherent in the persons themselves.

Now the privileges of the Blessed Mother upon which hyperdulia is founded differ in degree and nature from those of the saints which cause us to venerate them. Mary shares more than the ordinary grace of adoptive filiation. To her is attributed the plenitude of grace, and over and above this great gift is added the specifically distinct privilege of special affinity to God, the grace of divine Motherhood. Mary, as the Mother of God, enjoys an altogether unique excellence and a dignity by far transcending that of any other creature. In bringing forth Jesus, she brought forth God and enjoys therefore a special relationship not only with the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, but mediately, through Him, with the other Persons of the Godhead. All other creatures, even Saint Joseph, no matter how closely associated with Christ, pertain to the Hypostatic Union only extrinsically; the Blessed Mother, however, intrinsically. The inherent dignity of this calling of Mary as the Mother of God required a corresponding worthiness on the part of the recipient and gave her a position entirely unique among all creatures. Abstracting from the divine Maternity, however, the cult due the Blessed Virgin would be simply that of dulia; but in that she is really and truly the Mother of God, this foundation and root of all other graces and privileges proper to her gives her the right to the specifically distinct and superior type of veneration of hyperdulia.

Veneration is due the Blessed Virgin, then, because of her sanctity, for the higher the dignity and holiness of a person the greater is his or her claim to veneration and respect. Our Blessed Mother possessed holiness in a far more eminent degree than any of the angels or saints. She possessed a singular excellence. Our Holy Father, Pius XII, says: ". . . her life is most closely linked with the mysteries of Jesus Christ, and there is no one who has followed in the footsteps of the Incarnate Word more closely and with more merit than she: and no one has more grace and power over the Sacred Heart of the Son of God and through Him with the Heavenly Father." Further, her office of Coredemptrix, whereby she co-operated with Christ in our Redemption, her role as Mediatrix of all graces, and her position as Spiritual Mother of all men and Queen of the Universe give her a title to cult due in no way to any other saint. But especially her divine Maternity is seen as the ultimate basis and measure of veneration due her, and the privilege which entitles her to the special cult of hyperdulia.

We have seen the specifically distinct value of hyperdulia in the schema of cult. Let us now investigate further the foundation and basis of this special kind of veneration, the divine Maternity.

Mary co-operated physically and morally in the Incarnation. She was the means and the instrument of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the Hypostatic Union of the Divine Word and human nature. The objective dignity of Mary's Motherhood places her in a position entirely unique among all created beings, constitutes her in a position next to her Incarnate Son in the hierarchy of rational creatures, and places her as an intermediary between God and the universe.

This sublime dignity and excellence of divine Motherhood is not a quality, but a relation, and as such may be considered

to have a certain infinity. It is infinite not in an absolute sense, yet in a very real sense: the term of this relation is a divine Person. It is a reflection of the essentially infinite dignity of God. Apart from the Godhead, no higher dignity is conceivable. Thus the entirely unique dignity of Mother of God cannot be equaled, and is, in fact, beyond comparison with that of any other created person. Saint Albert the Great says: "The Son endows with infinity the goodness of His Mother. . . ."

This ineffable dignity proper to the Blessed Virgin is seen as the root and reason for all her extraordinary privileges and gifts. Mary's maternal relationship with her divine Son appears as the distinguishing mark of her person, and might well be defined, not simply as a physiological relation of mother to offspring, nor simply as an office given her by God endowed with special graces, but further, a supernatural spiritual union of the person of Mary with that of her divine Son, a union which implies a most intimate affinity and relationship with the Blessed Trinity. The dignity of the Blessed Mother, arising not simply from her physical maternity but also from her affinity to God consequent upon it, is seen as belonging to the hypostatic order, for the Blessed Virgin, in becoming the Mother of God, proximately and efficaciously co-operated with the Holy Spirit in bringing about the Hypostatic Union. Without question, there does not exist a more perfect association between a created personality and God.

The divine Maternity is then the basic motive for the cult of hyperdulia, which special veneration is due Mary not because of her fullness of grace alone; or her pre-eminence among men, but because she is really and truly the Mother of God. The divine Maternity is of course the basis also for the cult of the Heart of Mary, for her Heart as part of her person merits this same unique type of veneration. The

ultimate object of worship is without doubt her person, but the special and immediate object is in this case her Immaculate Heart.

The legitimacy of the cult of her Heart will be made evident when we come to consider that this veneration is directed at more than simply a more noble part of the Blessed Mother's body. It includes besides the natural and conventional connotation of the heart, the notion of love, all else that the symbol of the heart implies.

As we have intimated, and as we shall see even more clearly upon investigation of the object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, when we honor this part of the Blessed Mother's august body, we honor her entire person. All special veneration, whether of a mystery of Mary's life, e.g., her Immaculate Conception, or of a special virtue, e.g., her purity, or something pertaining to her person, e.g., her heart, have in common the same "obiectum materiale adaequatum seu mediatum" her person. And thus every type of veneration of Mary is given the rank of hyperdulia.

The Cult of the Immaculate Heart in Particular

In our ensuing discussion we will naturally be concerned not so much with the general veneration due the Blessed Mother as unique among all creatures, as with the special and particular cult we offer her Immaculate Heart. To determine therefore the exact meaning of the devotion we will first investigate the phrase "Immaculate Heart of Mary," with special emphasis on the meaning and connotation of the word heart.

In all languages the word heart is one to which innumerable meanings are attached. It is one of the richest of words, wide in its connotations. In all tongues we find the word used in

three ways: according to its real sense, in a symbolical sense, and in a metaphorical application, but always and in every case with at least some kind of logical connection.

In the real sense it refers of course to the physical organ of the body effecting the circulation of the blood and most important and indispensable in its function of preserving our natural life. In this sense we will refer to the Blessed Mother's Heart as her physical or corporeal Heart.

In the symbolical sense the heart is used as a sign for something apart from itself, but connected with the heart through some real association. Thus, the basis for the heart's symbolizing a thing in this sense is founded on more than mere convention; it is seen to have at least a remote foundation in reality. Thus we say the heart is the symbol of love, not simply because in all languages this connotation of the heart is accepted, but because there is at least remotely a real connection between our physical heart and the interior affections, especially that of love. The heart's activity is actually affected according as our senses are impressed, and especially according as our mind, our will, and our feelings react to various impressions or stimuli. Thus the heart is more than an arbitrary symbol of the interior dispositions of the soul, for it responds to them, it beats in sympathy with them, and is so affected by them that we say it participates in them.

In the metaphorical sense, which preserves a certain relation with the symbolical, it presupposes an analogy of improper proportionality including always at least a tacit comparison. In this sense the heart is employed in cases prescinding from any real relation which in actuality the object symbolized might be expected to have with the symbol, the physical heart. In this sense, then, the heart is the symbol of those activities and characteristics which we associate with

it, even though arising from a merely conventional and metaphorically accepted connotation. Thus we say "we learn a thing by heart," or Mary kept all these things carefully in her heart, in which phrases we refer for the main part to the memory, although we realize that the connection between the heart and the memory is purely a conventional one.

We find the word heart in the above-mentioned three senses in profane, biblical, and liturgical usage. In ordinary language, as a heritage from past ages, the heart is regarded as the center of spiritual and conscious life. It has come to symbolize all the properties of the soul, the virtues, the affections, the will, the memory, and the intelligence in general. It is often identified with the soul or with the emotions, and most commonly with the concept of love. We often find it used synecdochically to mean the entire man or person.

In biblical usage, heart, besides representing the physical organ of the body, is used to symbolize or represent physical strength in general; or the center of intellectual life; or again the center of affective life; and also, though more rarely, to signify love. Many times, as in profane usage, the heart is seen in Sacred Scripture as representative of the whole man.

In ecclesiastical usage, determined especially through the theological considerations of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, we find again a similar amplitude of connotation. The word heart is taken beyond its literal meaning to signify especially the virtue of love or charity. Thus in ecclesiastical and liturgical terminology reference is made to the corporeal heart and the spiritual heart. The corporeal heart, representing the heart of the flesh, recalls the human nature of Christ hypostatically united to the Word, or in the case of the Blessed Mother, her august physical person. The spiritual heart symbolically and metaphorically represents

the dispositions of the soul, sanctity in general, and especially charity and love, or the will itself as the first principle of love. Both the corporeal and spiritual hearts are taken as one object in the devotion to the Sacred Heart or the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The heart then in profane, biblical, and ecclesiastical usage is seen as a most common sign and symbol of love; but for a clear understanding of how the heart enters into the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary we shall have to investigate the concept of sign and symbol.

A sign is defined by John of Saint Thomas as "id quod potentiae cognoscitivae aliquid aliud a se repraesentat," and may be either natural if from its very nature, without any consideration of convention or custom, it represents equally to all something distinct from itself, or arbitrary if it represents the thing only by reason of the operation and will of men. A natural sign is either an image if it represents by reason of similarity or similitude, or not an image if it represents by reason of causality or some connection other than similitude or similarity. A natural sign that is an image is either a formal sign (in quo) if without any previous knowledge of itself it immediately represents something distinct from itself, or an instrumental sign (ex quo) if by reason of and through knowledge of itself it leads to the knowledge of something distinct from itself.

An arbitrary sign, according to John of Saint Thomas and philosophers generally, is either a sign "ad placitum" if it is imposed by some authority, or "ex consuetudine" if it is had because of common usage.

A natural sign that is not an image, as well as an arbitrary sign, is of course always an ex quo or instrumental sign.

A symbol, as we understand it today, is an instrumental sign taken for and standing for the thing which it represents. A sign, then, is referred to as a symbol when it is used in this particular way. Hence, in speaking of a symbol, we presuppose the nature and divisions of an instrumental sign.

Thus we see the primary end of symbolism is to impress upon our consciousness, by means of some object which can be perceived by our exterior senses, the recognition of a thing in the spiritual order for which the symbol stands.

In all symbolism we distinguish three elements: the sensible sign which represents to us some spiritual object, the spiritual object itself, and the formal reason for the symbolism or the relation existing between the sensible element and the spiritual.

Thus it belongs to the nature of symbolism that there be a connection between the thing symbolized and the symbol itself.

In reference to the heart as symbolizing love, we regard it as a natural symbol, not simply because the physical heart is in a sense a principle of life influencing all other organs, just as love similarly is the principle of the whole interior life, but because, as we have pointed out, the connection between the heart and love is not limited to this analogy alone, but is based on a real physical relationship.

Naturally, no one today considers the heart the organ which elicits love or other affections of the soul, ideas which persisted in the time of the early apostles of the cult of the Immaculate Heart, Saint John Eudes and Father Gallifet, and naturally influenced their writings. With the development of our physiological understanding of the nature of the heart, some authors took a new and quite opposite view of the

heart as a symbol, wishing to regard it as a purely arbitrary sign. During these years of readjustment of terminology the Church refrained from confirming any particular interpretation of the problem. Even in more recent times some authors still boldly persist in referring to the heart as the seat of love or organ of love, but these phrases must today be rightly interpreted.

In the theological field, of course, we are not concerned with a scientific analysis of the functions of the heart, but rather with what the concept of the heart is understood to convey to the minds of men. However, in view of the foregoing facts, to maintain both a scientific and theological accuracy we will avoid considering the heart merely an arbitrary symbol of love, or, on the other hand, the true and proper organ of love, but will regard it rightly as a natural symbol of love. The heart, inasmuch as it has a real relationship with the dispositions of the soul, is seen as a natural symbol especially of love and the other internal affections, and this according to most universal custom of word and gesture. Indeed, any- thing so vastly universal in character is hardly a purely conventional symbol.

We indicate, then, that the heart is seen in our devotion as the natural symbol of love. However, as we have already mentioned and will later explain in detail, the heart is understood in our devotion as symbolizing more than simply love and the internal affections; it includes also all those elements which make up the Blessed Mother's intimate life and sanctity.

Thus it symbolizes certain virtues, dispositions, and qualities which are by nature in no way connected with the heart as such. Of these elements in the devotion the heart cannot be a natural sign, but is seen as an arbitrary sign.

Our devotion looks also, and indeed in a principal manner, to our Blessed Lady's supernatural charity. The heart, a physical organ, cannot of course be a natural symbol of any supernatural quality, and hence is seen as again an arbitrary or conventional symbol of supernatural love and any other supernatural element included in the devotion.

Hence in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart fully understood, the heart is employed as both a natural and an arbitrary symbol, and can therefore be referred to as a mixed symbol. Thus, in accord with the profane, biblical, and ecclesiastical acceptations of the word, and in its literal meaning and symbolical implications, we use the term "heart" in Marian cult.

We are able to recognize these elements separately: the sensible object (*res significans*) is the physical heart of the Blessed Mother; the thing signified (*res significata*) is her extraordinary sanctity and love for God and man; the reason for the symbol (*ratio signi*!) is the relation existing between the heart and the notion of love.

In reference to her person, properly speaking, the term "heart" refers to the vital function of the physical organ. Symbolically, due to the reciprocal relationship between the heart and the affections, especially that of love, founded partly on physical reality and partly on universal acceptance in our manner of speaking, the heart conveys the idea of compassion, mercy, and of her entire affective life, above all else her love. Metaphorically, due to common and universal acceptance, her heart signifies her will, her soul, and whole person as loving, or her interior sanctity in general.

In view of these facts, even if not properly the principle of the affective life, and even if not by nature connected with much that it symbolizes, because of its many relationships

with the life of the soul and the interior affections, the physical heart is certainly the best and most universally accepted symbol of all that love and sanctity imply.

With these facts in mind it is therefore permissible to refer to Mary's heart as we do to our own, as praying, meriting, etc., for these operations of the person can be attributed to the heart through the figure of metonymy.

It is incorrect of course to attribute to Mary's heart whatever belongs strictly and properly to her whole person, or again, what belongs to some other part of her physical body apart from any connection with love. One must avoid also attributing to the heart anything which, even though legitimate, would detract from rather than contribute to the dignity of the veneration of the Mother of God.

Relationship with the Devotion to the Sacred Heart

Before undertaking a detailed investigation of the material and formal objects of the devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart it might be well to consider briefly the devotion with which it is intimately connected dogmatically and historically, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

From the mysteries of our holy religion, wherein the Blessed Mother is seen as occupying an essential and exalted position in the divine economy, there is evidenced the intimate union of Mary with her divine Son. Not only in the Incarnation and throughout her human life, but dogmatically and in the history of religious cult, the Blessed Mother bears a most intimate relation with our blessed Lord. The tremendous influence of Christ on His Mother, the workings of grace, and especially Mary's role as Mother of God, bind her to Christ in a union far beyond any ordinary association.

Indeed, this union of Mother and Son is so close, and Mary pertains so directly to the Incarnation and Redemptive work of Christ, that she belongs as an actual part to that section of Sacred Dogma, and is treated as such by Saint Thomas.

The indissoluble union and close relationship between Mary and her divine Son is reflected also in the devotion to their most august Hearts. The devotion to the Immaculate Heart is linked with that of the Sacred Heart both dogmatically and historically, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary possesses both a physical and a spiritual relationship with the most sacred Heart of her divine Son.

The physical relation is obvious, stemming from the natural union between mother and son; and thus the Heart of Mary played an essential and direct role in the formation of the physical Heart of Christ.

The spiritual bonds between the Sacred Heart and the Heart of Mary, though less obvious, are of much greater import. Saint Paul's inspired words tell us that Christ must so live in His servants that His life will be manifested in our bodies: ". . . that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4:11). In view of this fact, how great must be the extent Christ communicated His divine life to her from whom He received His human life. It is with this concept in mind that Saint John Eudes says Mary's Heart mirrors Christ's Sacred Heart.

The basic spiritual bond between these Hearts is, of course, the bond of love. The love of Christ for men includes naturally, in the first place, His Blessed Mother; and Mary's love for God of necessity includes the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, her divine Son.

The profound dogmatic grounds defining the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary can very well present both in an intimate union, justifying their being represented side by side as objects of devotion.

In the history of the cult of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, both liturgical and nonliturgical, the Hearts have been frequently united, and seldom have authors written extensively on the Sacred Heart without referring also to the Heart of Christ's Mother. Both devotions have encountered similar opposition and obstacles in their development.

Though similar in symbolism and analogy and as devotions, with many like characteristics, the devotion to the Sacred Heart is however unique for several reasons, as we shall point out briefly.

The first and most evident reason for the devotions lacking perfect parallelism arises from the fact that the physical Heart of Christ is hypostatically united to His Divine Person and worthy therefore of latreutic worship.

Further, in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the love which we regard as the proper object of our devotion includes, beyond created love, uncreated love; for the love of Christ, in virtue of the hypostatic union, is theandric, and includes the uncreated love of the Divine Word as well as the created love of the human Heart. Moreover, the love of the Sacred Heart includes, beyond the love of our Lord in His mortal life and life of glory, His love for men in the Holy Eucharist.

As a further mark of differentiation, in the case of Christ, His Heart represents formally only His human nature hypostatically united to this Divine Person; in Mary her Heart can be considered as representing her entire being inclusive of the prerogative of her Maternity, for her Heart is in a

sense the instrument of her physical and spiritual Motherhood.

Despite the differences in the nature of the two devotions, the veneration of the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God is nonetheless a reflection of that shown the Heart of her divine Son and ought to be examined in the light of it.

The objects of the devotions, material and formal, connected under the psychophysical symbolism of the heart, are indeed similar, but for a precise understanding of the meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary we will consider the object of this devotion in detail.

In summary and in conclusion we might observe that the two great devotions to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary are from an historical standpoint similar, from a philosophical standpoint the same, but dogmatically quite different.

The Object of the Devotion, Material and Formal

We have mentioned Mary's unique position among mankind and referred to her grace of Motherhood as the principal reason for her pre-eminence among all creatures. In virtue of her singular excellence and sanctity and because of her many extraordinary privileges, there is due her a veneration entirely her own. Her dignity as the Mother of God and her office as spiritual Mother of all men implies a relation of dependence upon Mary on the part of all mankind. As her subjects and spiritual children we need her intercession and mediation, and we owe her gratitude, esteem, and love. She has a right to our veneration and filial love, and it is our privilege to render her cult, to be devoted to her, to honor her, and by so doing to glorify God.

In considering in particular the meaning of the devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart it will be necessary for us to investigate thoroughly the object of the devotion, for cult, being a relative thing, is determined by the object with which it has relationship; or as we previously pointed out, since the excellence of some person is the formal object of cult, as we find different kinds and varying degrees of excellence, we offer different kinds and varying degrees of cult. Therefore to have a clear and precise understanding of any particular cult and its legitimacy, it is necessary to consider in detail the object which determines it.

In regard to objects in the concept of cult in general we distinguish two things: the material object, or that which we venerate (*id cui cultus exhibetur*), and the formal object, or the precise reason why we offer this worship or veneration (*ratio ob quam cultus tribuitur*). Since there is great diversity in the terminology employed by theologians in reference to the object of cult or veneration, for clarity and consistency in our own case we shall adopt the division of material and formal objects, each being further subdivided into mediate and immediate. The mediate material object is always the entire person to whom worship or veneration is offered, and the immediate material object is that part of the person, or thing joined to the person (e.g., mystery or virtue), to which cult is offered. The formal object is likewise divided into mediate and immediate. The mediate formal object is always the excellence of the whole person to whom cult is offered. The immediate formal object is that excellence under some particular aspect as, for instance, in the cult offered Mary's Immaculate Heart, that particular notion which the Heart symbolizes, Mary's love.

The basic notions of material and formal objects are clearly and concisely put forth by John of Saint Thomas when, speaking of the objects of faculties, he says: ". . . ex quo

colligitur, quid sit obiectum formale, quid materiale. . . . Obiectum formate dicitur illa formalitas seu respectus, secundum quern fit proportio et coaptatio inter obiectum et potentiam. Materiale dicitur illud, quod tali habitudini seu formalitati substernitur et subiectum eius est.

The Material Object

In view of our foregoing schema, the mediate material object, we indicated, is the entire person to whom worship or veneration is offered; hence in the veneration of the saints, if we say we honor some virtue or some great work of a certain individual, in reality we honor his entire person, for all cult terminates in the person, and any object or quality of an individual looks in its final analysis toward the entire person.

Likewise in the case of the Blessed Mother, all cult rendered to Mary, all types of devotion shown her, are directed ultimately to her person as such. Thus in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we recognize as the mediate material object, the person of Mary in her physical and moral integrity, to which of course her Heart pertains.

The immediate or proximate material object of cult, as we said, is that part of a person or that thing connected with or joined to a person which we venerate or worship. To better understand the immediate object is to see more clearly the meaning and the legitimacy of any particular devotion. In the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, as is evident in the title, we venerate in a special way the Heart of the Mother of God.

The first question which naturally presents itself is, in what sense is the Heart of Mary the object of our devotion? Do we

abstract from the physical or corporeal nature of her Heart and retain it only as some type of symbol?

In the case of the Sacred Heart, the first years this devotion was propagated the physical heart was certainly understood as being included in the object of worship. The second phase, initiated at the time of further scientific discoveries in the understanding of the true nature of the heart, accentuated the opposite tendency which strongly favored regarding the heart as merely a symbol arbitrarily chosen to convey the idea of love. The third and present phase is a reconciliation of the two ideas, including both, as the liturgy of the feast clearly indicates.

Supported unwittingly by certain overcautious Catholics who feared criticism of Protestant sects, it was the Jansenists who first vehemently held that the devotion to the Heart of Jesus did not include an actual veneration or worship of the heart of the flesh, but was directed solely to the love of Christ which only through a metaphor was expressed by the word heart. Certainly, the Church did not adopt and approve the devotion merely because of the intrinsic dignity of the physical heart, but she nonetheless soon made it clear that the true object of the devotion actually included the heart of the flesh as joined to the Person of Christ.

In the Apostolic Constitution "Auctorem Fidei" of Pope Pius VI we have a clear statement of the error of those who attempted to exclude the physical heart of Christ from the latreutic worship due it in the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Thus the concise surety of Father Terrier's words, 'that it is certain and solidly established that the physical heart of Christ is worthy of latreutic adoration, and as such is the proper object of the feast and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

This correct notion is confirmed by the revelations to Saint Margaret Mary and by early ecclesiastical authors, especially Saint John Eudes.

The simple analogy of the devotion to the Heart of Jesus with that of the Immaculate Heart would not be sufficient in itself to make it certain that in the latter devotion the physical heart is also to be included in the material object of veneration. Thus, although we ought always to refer to what the Church and sacred authors say of the Sacred Heart and apply these notions prudently to the Immaculate Heart, the question remains, can the physical heart of Mary be established as included in the material object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart? In other words, we ask, does the physical heart of Mary possess, besides its excellence as a symbol, any special excellency which merits in itself that it be specially venerated, and venerated within what the Church calls the devotion to the Immaculate Heart?

We answer by citing, besides the analogy with the devotion to the Sacred Heart, the following arguments and explanations.

From ecclesiastical documents and from liturgical and nonliturgical sources we find no indication that the physical heart is meant to be excluded.

When the question of the fitness and utility of including the physical heart was proposed to consultors, varying opinions were given. One opinion, affirmative, regarded the physical heart as the "tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, and the seat of all her affections and symbol of her most ardent love." Another, negative, stated that no feast of the Blessed Mother had any part of her physical person as its object, and hence the present case was to be no exception.

Today, in the Mass and Office approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, the physical heart is not explicitly pointed to, nor is it so in the papal letter of instruction *Urbis et Orbis*; yet, to interpret these prayers and statements apart from the inclusion of the physical heart in the devotion is to render them fairly incomprehensible.

We do have some direct mention of the corporeal heart in earlier liturgies, as in the hymn for Vespers in the Office of Saint John Eudes:

Miranda Matris viscera, Miranda sunt et ubera, Regale
sed Cor omnibus Miraculis praestantius.

The argument from authority is clearly to uphold the inclusion of the physical heart in the object of veneration. Saint John Eudes devoted a whole chapter to the merits and dignity of the physical heart of Mary. The same idea was carried on and defended by the early apostles, Fathers Gallifet and Pinamonti, and is today defended by practically all authors.

From reason we can propose several arguments in defense of the inclusion of the physical heart of Mary in the devotion to her Immaculate Heart. We find the saints, as privileged members of the Church Triumphant, worthy objects of cult in regard to their person, relics, and body. In the case of Mary, then, whose immaculate body is in every way more worthy of veneration than that of any saint, and whose sanctity transcends that of even the angels, it is natural and spontaneous for us to venerate the "pars nobilior" of her physical body, her Immaculate Heart.

Mary's pre-eminence, and even that of her heart, is of course not denied by any Catholic; yet the further question remains by what right is her physical heart chosen over all else as

the object of special veneration, and does it belong as such to the particular devotion of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as understood by the Church?

The reasons why the heart is singled out as the object of devotion are seen to be multiple. As we mentioned and explained earlier, the heart is the "manifestive" organ of love. Its physiological properties and its psychological relevancy make it a fit object of veneration. As the organ which supplies the body with blood, it was, in the case of the Blessed Mother, a part of her person closely related to the human nature of Christ. Beyond playing an important role in the physical maternity, it is even more important in connection with our devotion inasmuch as it is intimately connected with the affections of Mary's maternal soul. The splendor of Mary's sanctity and the mysteries of her life, especially her Maternity, are concentrated in the love reflected in her Heart. "The synthesis of the human-divine life of Christ is love, which finds its concrete expression in the devotion to the Sacred Heart; and the synthesis of the life of the Mother of God is also love, which makes her Heart, after the Heart of Christ to which it is subordinated, the most worthy object of religious devotion."

Further, the heart is reasonably an object of worship inasmuch as the Church ordinarily approves for veneration only objects in some way concretized and possessing a material element. Such objects fulfill more adequately man's spiritual needs and correspond to man's own make-up of both body and soul. In her wisdom the Church wishes to impress men sensibly as well as spiritually, hence the appropriateness of a physical element in this devotion to Mary.

As early as 1857 the Sacred Congregation of Rites alleged two reasons why Mary's Heart is to be considered worthy of

special veneration, both reasons arising from the dignity of Mary as the Mother of God. The first reason offered was the perfection of Mary's Heart, regarded either spiritually, indicative of the affections of her soul, especially her love; or sensibly, as truly a part of her body. In no nature except Christ's is seen such purity, sanctity, and perfection. Thus did God bring it about for all men, even the most hardened sinners, that the "Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary would be the Heart of a Mother, Queen, and Advocate offering help, refuge,, consolation, and love," The second reason arises from the intimate relationship or "indissoluble bond" between Mother and Son which demands that Mary's Heart be associated with Christ's in cult.

Thus the Sacred Congregation indicated that the devotion to the Immaculate Heart includes not only the excellence of the love Mary's Heart represents, but also the very excellence of the Heart itself. Her Heart must pertain then to the devotion as more than simply a symbol; it belongs to the devotion as a heart ut stc.

Further, the reason for any worship is always the excellence of a person or thing; but the physical heart of Mary actually enters into the object of veneration in this case partly because it in itself possesses excellence. It has the natural nobility of being an important physical organ. Through its natural connection with the affections and the convergency of them in it, it is considered the affective center of man, and has come to be universally accepted as synonymous with and the symbol of love.

True enough, some would overlook any real or physical connection between the heart and love and still retain the physical heart as a true symbol and object of devotion, saying that the physical heart is venerated not because of itself, but by reason of love, the extrinsic perfection

attributed to it. For them, the symbolical and metaphorical heart is considered to include the notion of the physical heart. They see no intrinsic relation between the physical heart and love as a reason for veneration of the heart in itself, and for its own excellence.

It is true, apart from its connection with the affections, the physical heart of Mary is not given any special veneration over and above that offered other parts of her body, for if it were not regarded also as a symbol, it would not exceed in importance or dignity certain other members of Mary's most holy person. Moreover, it would not have played, in its connection with the circulatory and nervous systems, a more fundamental role than other parts of her body in the conception and gestation of Christ.

However, in our devotion we maintain that the natural connection between the physical heart and love is not to be disregarded. Because of this bond the intrinsic dignity of the heart is enhanced by the extrinsic dignity of love attributed to it, and the physical heart itself has more than an ordinary claim to veneration.

We emphasize, then, the fact that the heart enters into the devotion to the Immaculate Heart primarily because of its connection and relationship with love and the affective life of Mary, but also, even though very secondarily, because of its own intrinsic dignity.

Therefore, besides being universally understood as the symbol of love, because of the natural bond between the physical heart and the affections, the corporeal heart is seen as part of the object of our devotion, forming with the symbolical and metaphorical heart one object of veneration. In this way there is clearly evidenced the unity of object of the devotion with which we are concerned.

Truly, in our devotion the heart and the love it represents are distinct, but in a sense identified, inasmuch as love extends to the heart and the heart is in turn affected by and reflects love. The heart is not formally love, nor does it cause love directly, nor does it possess in itself the equal excellence of love. Its own excellence is really that of love itself, in which, on account of its proper nature, it shares by reflecting and participating in the passions and affections.

Thus the heart and love, though absolutely distinct, are in a sense identified, for love extends itself to the heart and the heart shares in and reflects love. We see then the excellency of love and of the heart through love, as numerically one and the same excellence, for inasmuch as the heart participates in the excellency of love, the two notions are therefore inseparable.

In view of these facts, there exists an analogy between the concept of the heart and that of love. This analogy, as we said earlier, is not one of proper proportionality, for the heart is not formally or intrinsically love. We have rather an analogy of improper proportionality (metaphor) , as well as one of attribution in that it is connatural for the heart to reflect the movements of love.

In the case of the Blessed Mother, the excellency of her Heart in regard to love and the excellency of her love itself are numerically one and the same excellence. The love which surrounds the heart forms with it an "indivisible whole," and the physical heart is in itself revered along with the love it symbolizes in one and the same act of veneration. Mary's Heart and love are inseparable in this devotion the Heart as influenced by and reflecting love, and love as reflected in and influencing the Heart. It is in this sense that Mary's Heart becomes the receptacle of her immense love.

In summation, we observe again that the relation between the heart and love is founded on natural physiology, and the heart, because of this bond, can share in and reflect in its proper function the affections of the soul. The heart is not first associated with love because it is its symbol; on the contrary, it is its symbol because it has a real relationship with this same affection or passion. It is a natural symbol of love, a symbol by proper right.

The physical heart of Mary, then, is not connected with her love merely as a symbol. Through its natural properties and functions it is the instrument of her love before it is its symbol. It remains naturally apt to be its symbol because it is in a real sense a living expression of her love.

The Heart of Mary in itself participates in the excellency of her love, and therefore shares the reverence which is due the excellency of the love of the Mother of God. In this way the physical heart becomes the object of veneration, and Mary is venerable in and through her physical heart, which is revered fully and jointly with the excellence of love in which it shares and for which it stands. Thus in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we see as a fundamental basis of cult, the perfection of the Heart of Mary considered both physically and morally.

We note here, in view of the above, that to honor the love of Mary without reference to her physical heart; or the Heart of Mary entirely divorced from the idea of love, would be a practice of salutary piety, but not the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God as approved by the Church.

Thus the material object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is adequately expressed through the physical heart of Mary, and therefore the phrase "the devotion to the

Immaculate Heart of Mary" is perfectly acceptable and scientific. The devotion can be rightly defined as "the veneration of the Heart of Mary or of Mary in her Heart." Or, "the veneration of Mary for the excellency of her love as reflected and symbolized in her Heart." Or also, "the veneration of Mary in her physical heart reflecting and symbolizing her love." Thus we say Mary's physical heart, together with her love, enters always as one object into the particular devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God.

Adopting, as we are, the person of the Blessed Mother as the mediate material object of our devotion, we see her physical heart? inasmuch as it is the symbol of her sanctity and love, as the immediate material object in which proximately our veneration is terminated.

Because of the unity of object in our devotion, that is, because of the close connection between the heart and what it symbolizes, we have already of necessity spoken considerably of love. It remains for us to investigate it further, however, in the formal object of our devotion.

The Formal Object

In continuing our considerations of the meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, we turn our attention now to that element in the devotion which is its form, and which is the reason why we venerate the material object.

As we have already mentioned, the formal object of cult or veneration is always the excellence found in the material object which merits our veneration. Thus in the case of the devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart, the mediate formal object is the excellence of Mary's entire person, body and soul. It is this exalted excellence we look to which includes

all the prerogatives and privileges of the Blessed Mother. Her unique position among mankind is brought to mind by the Scriptures, especially by the words of the angel, the salutation of Elizabeth, the praise of the woman in the crowd, and in fact by every scriptural reference to our Blessed Lady. And these acknowledgments of her unique excellence have been reechoed down through the ages in the teachings of our holy Mother the Church. The writings of theologians and the saints and the words of the liturgy have been one grand chorus in the praise of the excellence of Mary.

The precise aspect of her excellence and the particular quality of Mary upon which we focus our attention in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is the immediate formal object of our veneration, and in the present instance, following the words of the Holy Father, we posit as this object of the cult to the Immaculate Heart, Mary's extraordinary sanctity, and especially her love for God and man.

The excellency of her love is the primary reason for our devotion, but this notion of our Lady's love is to be understood, as we shall attempt to show, in its normal full extension; thus, in the letter of instruction *Urbis et Orbis*, along with love as the motive of our veneration of Mary in her Immaculate Heart, mention is made also of Mary's extraordinary and singular sanctity.

The formal object is extensive in including the sanctity and the interior life of the Blessed Virgin which wider notions are, of course, not adequately distinct from love, for Mary's charity is intimately bound up with her sanctity, the mysteries of her life, and all her supernatural actions and qualities. Inasmuch as charity is the form of all the other virtues, and in that grace itself works through charity, we

see maintained a unity in the formal object of the devotion, but an extension corresponding perfectly to the extension of the symbolism of the heart, which, symbolizing primarily love, is understood as inclusive also of the other affections of the soul and of all which corresponds to and is included in Mary's sanctity.

We shall investigate, first, the love of Mary as the formal object of our devotion, seeing what aspect of her love is stressed in the devotion to her Immaculate Heart, and then, what further this love implies.

We repeat here one preliminary observation which has been earlier explained; namely, that any devotion toward a particular virtue, perfection, or mystery, and thus even to the broad concept of Mary's love, must necessarily have a relation to the subsisting whole to which it belongs, and is ultimately terminated in God Himself.

Therefore the ultimate meaning of the devotion to the Heart of Mary is the devotion to Mary in her Heart, and to her as intimately related to the Godhead.

As the chosen daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Mary enjoys a special relationship with the Most Holy Trinity, and it is no wonder we see her possessing a most perfect charity, greatest among all creatures." Saint John Eudes explains how the eternal Father made Mary participate in His love for His incarnate Son, how Christ communicated to Mary His love for God the Father, and how the Holy Spirit, in choosing her as His Spouse, inflamed her Heart with a love worthy of so exalted a privilege. Nor is Mary's love for men a less extraordinary thing, "for she loves us with the very same love with which she loves her Divine Son, for she knows that

He is our Head and we are His members, and we are therefore one with Him."

To better understand the nature and the grandeur of the love of Mary for God and man, however, we might well consider briefly some basic notions in regard to love and the virtue of charity.

True enough, in the human soul, it is the passion love which is the principle of all emotional activity; it is the virtue of charity which is the form and perfection of all our supernatural acts. Charity, says Saint Thomas, is the virtue of virtues, and is to the life of the soul as the soul is to the life of the body. Grace itself, from which merit proceeds, works more principally through charity or love than through the other virtues, and it is love therefore that is the moral and meritorious cause of greater perfection and excellence in the human soul.

Applying some of these basic notions to our Blessed Mother, we realize the entire divine life of her most holy soul was based on her love: her ineffable charity informed all her supernatural acts. Thus Saint John Eudes says "all her interior and exterior actions were stamped with the seal of divine love."

It is not our purpose to investigate in detail the nature of the virtue of charity or the function of love in the human soul, but rather to see two things: first, that the formal object which specifies this devotion is actually Mary's love, and secondly, how, in this devotion, the love of Mary is to be understood.

In regard to the first point, the very fact that in this devotion the Mother of God is venerated through her Immaculate Heart is indicative of the basic role played by her love.

Historically, saints and ecclesiastical writers have always exalted her most ardent charity in connection with this devotion. Saint John Eudes' writings are filled with allusions to the love of Mary in connection with her Heart, and he dedicated sections of his writings specifically to exalting and explaining her Heart as the miracle of love and mirror of charity.

From the earliest years of public devotion to Mary's Heart, the Masses and Offices composed have always focused attention on this virtue. 8 In 1804 the feast in honor of the Heart of Mary was proposed as "the Feast of the most ardent charity of Mary." In 1855, when the Church approved a proper Office for the feast, the consultors spoke both of the ineffable chanty of the Blessed Virgin, surpassing by far the merits and virtues of the saints, and of her Heart, the seat of her most pure affections and symbol of her love.

The primacy of love in connection with the devotion has never been seriously challenged. Even when the title of the feast was changed to "The Most Pure Heart of Mary" with some stress given the purity of Mary's life and actions, the primacy of love in the devotion still remained.

With the institution of the universal feast there can be no doubt about the meaning of the devotion, for the Mass, Office, and liturgical documents (included in the Office) make it clear that, in this particular Marian veneration, we look especially to our Lady's love as symbolized by her most august Heart.

In regard to the second point how Mary's love is to be specified or understood in the devotion we had no early authoritative statement determining the matter. Hence, for many years, and indeed up until relatively recent times, the devotion was ordinarily considered to regard mainly Mary's

love for God and her divine Son, her love for her spiritual children being included, but not emphasized in the devotion. This understanding naturally distinguished the devotion to Mary's Heart from that to the Sacred Heart as we know it since the revelations to Saint Margaret Mary, wherein our devotion is especially directed to the Divine Heart as overflowing with love for men. Allied to this difference was the fact that the first act of devotion in the cult of the Sacred Heart was an act of love in response to the love of Christ; in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart no such first act was clearly indicated, and perhaps imitation superseded the role of love."

Today, in the case of the Sacred Heart, theologians are practically unanimous in the opinion that the fundamental reason for our devotion is the redemptive love of Christ for all mankind. Christ's love for His eternal Father is given a secondary place in the devotion. The images of the Sacred Heart surrounded with thorns and pierced by a lance would seem to bear this out, as certainly the liturgy does, wherein the hymns, antiphons, and lessons, as well as the oration, Epistle, and Gospel of the Mass, emphasize Christ's love for us. The revelations to Saint Margaret Mary, "Behold this Heart which has so loved men," are fully in accord with this interpretation.

In the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the changing liturgies cannot be said to have always corresponded completely to the liturgy of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Certainly Mary's sufferings, her compassion, and her love for us were indicated in the early liturgies, but the emphasis of the devotion was centered on her love for God, the importance of her virtues, and the great influence that her Heart had in her Maternity. Hence it was generally felt that if Mary's love for men was to be regarded to any

great extent in the devotion, it was to be seen under the aspect of her role as Mediatrix rather than as Coredemptrix.

In recent decades, however, during which various factors have given great impetus to the spread of the devotion, there has been greatly emphasized Mary's concern for her spiritual children, and her solicitude for the conversion of sinners.

In 1942, the formula employed by Pope Pius XII for the Consecration of the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary certainly emphasized our Lady's love for mankind. This is brought out by the opening words of the Consecration, "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Help of Christians, Refuge of the Human Race . . ." and is indicated in the remainder of the formula.

We note especially with the extension of the feast to the universal Church, the changes in the liturgy are directed for the most part to emphasize Mary's maternal love for man, thus making the devotion more perfectly analogous with that of the Sacred Heart. Today, then, as on the Feast of the Sacred Heart we honor especially the redemptive love of Christ, on the Feast of the Immaculate Heart we honor the coredemptive love of Mary.

The decree of 1944 and the new Mass Adeamus include explicitly the maternal love of Mary for men. The Gospel (John 19:25-27) is evidently meant to stress Mary's spiritual maternity, which same idea is present in the lessons of the Third Nocturn. The liturgy would indicate that the feast looks primarily to Mary's coredemptive love, and is meant to be a celebration in a special way of her spiritual Maternity. Recent documents in the Acta of the Holy See continue to stress the Immaculate Heart as a symbol of this maternal love.

We do not, of course, lose sight of the fact that Mary's love for her divine Son and for her Creator is still a major element in the devotion, calling forth our imitation. We realize that ultimately her love for God and for man is one and the same charity. Certainly, the supernatural virtue of charity is indescribably more ardent in the Blessed Virgin's Heart where its object is God rather than man; yet, inasmuch as she loves God and us with substantially the same charity, though different in degree, Mary loves us with the same love wherewith she loves God Himself. Therefore, in loving God Mary loves us, and in loving us she loves God, seeing and loving Him in us. Her love for man is the fruit of her love for the Godhead.

The Church, in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, does not exclude Mary's extraordinary love for God in celebrating in a special way her maternal love for men; thus we might summarize the spiritual element in our devotion as the charity of Mary toward God, her love for Christ, and especially her love for us as her spiritual children.

Being all-inclusive of Mary's charity, our devotion refers to this great virtue of the Mother of God both antecedent and consequent to her divine Maternity. Mary's love and perfect charity from the very beginning of her existence is fully contained in the object of the devotion to her Immaculate Heart. Prior to her Maternity there is particularly included the charity of her Heart present in her praying for the Messiah: as the saints say, "*Mariae amor Verbum e coelo in terram veluti traxit.*"

Mary's charity at the time of the Incarnation is definitely regarded in this devotion, and it is in this connection that we find the first associations of her love with her Immaculate Heart in the writings of the saints. Mary's love was not simply a preparation for her divine Maternity; it also

intervened directly in the act itself by which she became the Mother of God. From the Gospel of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26ff.), we know Mary's "Fiat" to have been a free act of the will upon which the Incarnation was contingent, and an act proceeding from her immense love and her will to conform her own will to that of God. Hence Saint Augustine says of Mary's answer to the angel, "*non concupiscentia carnis urente factam, sed fidei charitate ferventi.*" In the Incarnation, love actually played a role prior to, and a role in the Maternity of Mary, being an essential part of the act whereby Mary became physically the Mother of God.

In the Incarnation Mary's consent was formally an act of the will, which, among the internal faculties of man, is often signified in speech by the word "heart." Thus we say the "Heart" of Mary influenced her consent, for her "Fiat" was an act of her will which proceeded from love; hence we see how naturally we associate Mary's Immaculate Heart with her love in the Incarnation.

But further, we point out that this love in the Incarnation included Mary's charity toward man as well as God, for in becoming the Mother of the Redeemer, Mary became more than the physical Mother of Christ, she became also the Mother of Men. She willingly and knowingly gave her consent, realizing the salvific mission of Christ, and realizing that in consenting to the divine Maternity she accepted Christ as our Redeemer and all the consequences this acceptance entailed, inclusive of the sufferings of her maternal Heart. She wished by her consent, not only the birth of Christ, but the birth of all men to the life of grace.

The motive of her consent could not have been her love for her divine Son alone, for if this were so she would have certainly prevented His immense sufferings and death. It

was rather her love for the Eternal Word united with that she had for mankind which prompted her willing consent.

Mary's charity and love is the basis of her coredemptive acts, for because of her love she willed to accept her difficult role in God's pattern of salvation. Since her sufferings were internal and since she willed to accept them, we call them sufferings of the heart. "Stabat iuxta crucem Jem Mater eius, quae tacta in nos caritate immensa ut susciperet filios, Filium ipsa suum ultro obtulit iustitiae divinae, cum eo commoriens Corde, doloris gladio transfixa."

Thus love is seen as the motive of Mary's accepting her part in our redemption it is the motive of her oblation. Her love, in and with that of Christ, effects our salvation, and constitutes her our Mother. "Sed plane mater membrorum eius, quod nos sumus; quia cooperata est caritate ut fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur, quae illius capitis membra sunt: corpore vero ipsius capitis mater."

Because of the connection between the spiritual Maternity of Mary and her suffering and her charity, we see how the coredemptive love of Mary is rightfully stressed in the devotion to her Immaculate Heart. But the love of the Blessed Virgin which we regard in our devotion is not simply that of her Heart at the time of the Annunciation or Incarnation, or even only that of her Heart in her entire role in the coredemption, including her "Fiat" and her sufferings at the foot of the Cross; it includes also the charity of Mary's Heart in its full splendor and augmentation up until the end of her mortal life (charitas consummata), and the charity of her Heart as our Mediatrix and our Queen in heaven (charitas beatifica).

In heaven Mary's soul retains its spiritual potencies, relative habits acquired and infused, and some acts of these

faculties and habits. True, in heaven, faith gives way to the Beatific Vision, and hope to the possession of God, but charity remains, and remains in a grade corresponding to the status of the soul at the end of one's mortal life.

In this regard we see Mary's love and even her Heart to possess a special connection with her Assumption into heaven; hence the Feast of the Immaculate Heart is today fittingly celebrated throughout the universal Church on the Octave day of this great Holy Day of Obligation.

Because of this connection the devotion to the Immaculate Heart can in fact be taken as an argument for Mary's Assumption, for, in the devotion, Mary's physical heart and her love form one numerically indivisible object of veneration. To separate one element from the other is to place oneself outside the devotion, for its very essence denies divisibility of the sign and the thing symbolized.

As Mary's love is imperishable and constitutes her greatest title for glory in heaven, it remains always to vivify and be associated with her Heart. If this were not true, and if Mary's Heart along with the rest of her august body were not already glorified in heaven, the devotion to her Immaculate Heart would be meaningless.

In heaven Mary reigns "with her Son, her body and soul refulgent with heavenly glory," and the love of her Heart which played an all-important role in her life, especially in the Incarnation and in the complete work of coredemption, continues its role in heavenly mediation, where Mary's intercession likewise depends on the charity of her Heart. Her immense charity is, in fact, not only the motive for her intercession, it is also the cause of its great efficacy.

We look in our devotion to the complete love or charity which marked Mary's entire mortal life, her love which grew and was augmented up to the very day of her Assumption into heaven, and which exists today and functions in her Heart in a marvelous manner in her mediation for us, as Queen of Heaven.

As we have earlier indicated, however, in this discussion of the formal object of our devotion, love, though primary, is not the sole element to which this object extends. There is included also the more general notion of Mary's sanctity, her virtues and gifts, and her entire interior life.

The early liturgies connected Mary's Heart with her plenitude of grace and with the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, which latter idea is retained in the Oration of the Mass for the universal feast.

As the liturgies included grace which perfects the soul itself, mention was also made of the virtues which perfect the soul in its supernatural actions. The old liturgies often make allusions to both the theological and the moral virtues. The former feast certainly included Mary's purity as was indicated by the very title, Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. The universal feast today, in employing the word "Immaculate," indicates also a broader extension than that of love alone.

Mary's sorrows and sufferings, with which are linked her compassion and mercy, have always been associated with the devotion, due no doubt largely to Simeon's prophetic words (Luke 2:35); and though we find no longer any direct references to her sorrows in the Mass and Office for the feast, these ideas are not now excluded, for they are connected with her interior life and her charity.

Hence, as has been indicated by the liturgy, there is universally considered as included in this devotion not only Mary's love, but all with which it is directly connected her sanctity, virtues, interior affections, and entire supernatural life.

This extension and scope of the formal object of the devotion is a most logical thing in that all Mary's supernatural activity is intimately connected with her charity; and in this devotion, we use her Heart as a symbol of her love and charity, and a symbol can be extended. Thus the heart symbolizes love first, but secondarily extends as a symbol to other activities related to love.

Certainly love is connected with all the virtues, and even though grace is not to be identified with charity, yet charity is its primary effect and the measure of its intensity. Love on the other hand is the cause of the increase of grace and the deepening of the interior life of the soul.

The heart as a symbol then refers to the love of Mary, her virtues, all the perfections which were a preparation for her to be the Mother of God, and the enhancement of all these perfections through her actually becoming God's Mother. It symbolizes also the perfections entitling her to be, and consequent upon her role as the spiritual Mother of men. All these perfections are part of her interior life and constitute her sanctity, and all are symbolized by her Heart. We can conclude therefore that the formal object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is not a particular virtue or perfection, act or mystery, but includes all that falls under the extension of the material object Mary's entire sanctity, with all the virtues, gifts, and perfections which constitute it, but all these as consummated in her love.

Mary's love, and its extension in the formal object of our devotion might well be synthesized in the following manner.

We venerate Mary for three reasons her eminent sanctity, her Maternity, and her share in the redemptive work of Christ. But all these resolve themselves to love.

In the case of her sanctity, it is seen as the fruit of sanctifying grace which culminates in charity. The quintessence of Mary's sanctity is her supernatural love, which Saint Thomas calls the form, root, and motive of all the other virtues and hence the source of all supernatural activity.

Mary's Maternity is also profoundly related to love, and therefore the heart. Love preceded it, entered the act, and marked the existing relationship thereafter.

In the role of Coredemptrix, Mary's participation in the redemption of men was the fruit of her love. It was only because of her love that she consented to share in this redemptive work, and only because of the strength of her love that she carried it out so perfectly.

Therefore, the splendor of Mary's sanctity, the entire grand mystery of her Maternity, and the fullness of her mission as Coredemptrix of mankind is concentrated in her love and, through it, reflected in her Heart.

Because of the connection between Mary's sanctity and her Maternity, and between her role as Coredemptrix and her Maternity, the devotion to the Immaculate Heart in its final analysis resolves itself to an exaltation of Mary's love in the function of her Maternity.

In conclusion, the object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary can be summarized in this way. The material

object is the physical heart of Mary inasmuch as it is a symbol of her love for God and man; the formal object is the excellency of this love which her Heart symbolizes.

We view the "physical heart as a symbol" as a unit, thus giving our devotion a twofold element, but not a double material object. In having a twofold element, one corporeal, one spiritual, the devotion corresponds to man's make-up of body and soul. But rather than speak of the corporeal heart as opposed to the spiritual heart, we regard the "physical heart as a symbol" as adequately including both ideas. In a final analysis, the spiritual heart about which authors sometimes speak cannot exist independently of the corporeal heart, and we rather view it, then, as what it actually is "the physical heart as a symbol" thus preserving unity in the material object of our devotion.

In the formal object we look practically exclusively to the excellencies of Mary's love; the excellencies of Mary's physical heart are not so much part of the formal object as the reason why the heart has become the material object.

By viewing the formal and material objects in this light we avoid having specifically different formal objects rooted in two material objects adequately distinct.

Only inasmuch as the excellency of Mary's love is considered the formal object of our devotion, and the physical heart as a symbol of her love the material object, can we preserve perfect unity in our veneration.

This division of objects we have adopted, though not universally followed, ought to be acceptable to all in the realization that any act of devotion or veneration to Mary's Heart includes of necessity both elements, thus viewing the object of our veneration as "aliquid unum."

It is from the material object, Mary's Heart, that we get the title for the devotion, and it is in the formal object, Mary's love, that we see the meaning of the devotion. Both the material and formal objects are distinguishing marks differentiating the devotion to the Immaculate Heart from all other Marian venerations.

In view of the foregoing discussion of the objects of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we have seen more clearly what exactly the devotion represents, and therefore, in resolving the meaning of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, we say it is the habitual practice of interior and exterior acts of hyperdulia rendered the physical heart of Mary, considered as the symbol of her eximious and unique holiness, and especially of her most ardent love for God and for Jesus her Son, as well as her motherly affection for men redeemed by the divine blood.

Objections to the Devotion

It seems fitting here to attempt to clarify several objections toward the devotion, some which have arisen opposing the devotion in a general way, and some which militate toward the exclusion of the physical heart as part of the object.

1) One of the first objections is a difficulty already brought forth by a Promotor of the Faith in connection with the Feast of the Sacred Heart; namely, that the devotion to the Heart of Mary offers occasion to have as many particular devotions as there are parts to the body of the Blessed Mother.

The solution to this difficulty is evident. True, each and every member of the most pure body of the Blessed Virgin, as part of her person, is worthy of veneration, but the heart, because of its specific and particular excellence merits in its own right a particular veneration in view of its role in Mary's

mortal life and because today in heaven it remains the naturally apt symbol of all the affections of Mary's soul, especially her love. No other member of her body has a constant relationship with any one sentiment of the soul, and does not, therefore, form an "indivisible union" as that upon which the devotion we speak of rests. This particular type of association is verified only by the heart and love.

2) A further objection is offered in that the heart is not, strictly speaking, the organ which elicits the affection of love.

True, today we know the cerebral-spinal system to be the seat of, or eliciting organ of, sensory love. But though the former notions concerning the heart are seen to have been quite incorrect, the heart remains, nonetheless, the manifestive organ of love in the sense that it is directly affected by all emotions strongly felt, especially by that of love, and is retained in our manner of speaking, for natural as well as conventional reasons, as representative of and connected with love, which, according to Saint Thomas, "precedes all other affections of the soul and is the cause of them."⁵⁴ Thus, although the heart has lost much of its former prestige due to modern physiological discoveries, in a very real sense it still remains a basic principle of our physical life, analogous with love, principle of our moral life.

3) Another objection arises from the great extension and vastness of the object of the devotion. In 1904, one of the Promoters, examining the fitness and appropriateness of the devotion to the Heart of Mary observed that the object of the devotion was so wide as to allow it to be confused with the general devotion to the Blessed Mother.

As we have already indicated and will consider in greater detail later, all the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin fall

under the devotion to her Immaculate Heart in a marvelously harmonious pattern, and thus our devotion does include much pertinent to a general devotion to the Mother of God. However, the devotion to the Immaculate Heart has a peculiar and singular physiognomy which sets it off from any general veneration, for in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we do not consider the mysteries of Mary's life and person in a collective manner, as we do in a general devotion to her, nor separately (*simpliciter*), as in various particular devotions, but we consider them in the light of their prime source and center, Mary's love.

4) The objection that the devotion as it regards the physical heart or what it symbolizes is a recent development and an attempt to invent a novel veneration for Mary is readily refuted by the words of the letter of instruction of our Holy Father Pius XII, who says that the vestiges of the devotion can be found in the commentaries of the Fathers on the Spouse of the Canticle of Canticles. We have mentioned earlier the sources and origins of the devotion in Sacred Scripture and in the writings of early centuries.

5) The objection that there have been exaggerations of the excellencies of the physical heart is not a direct criticism of the devotion, and therefore need not be answered here. We note, however, that these errors, if still prevalent, spring largely from the strong influence of early writers and apostles around the time of Saint John Eudes, and these theologians are to be excused for their exaggerations, for they were following simply the accepted physiological facts of their day.

The main objections to considering the heart of the flesh as the material object of the devotion seem to have arisen during the era when the physical heart was losing much of its prestige in connection with the body. We might observe

that even today, however, the ordinary person is poorly acquainted with the anatomy of the heart in its physiological make-up, and in our normal lives the heart is still commonly presented and is primarily thought of as the symbol of love. Men attribute to the physical heart some associations which are definitely not connected with it, as, e.g., coldness of character, weakness, or physical strength. We also attribute to it physical sensations which are in reality connected with other organs. We make some associations with but remote foundation, e.g., vitality, sorrow, joy, and pain; in which cases, unless extreme; the function of the heart is not perceptibly affected.

The heart is retained, however, in all languages in all these metaphorical meanings, and therefore is not to be eliminated from being included in the object of our devotion as the symbol also of those affections of the soul with which it has no real physical relationship.

Chapter 3 - The Purpose of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart

Through our discussion of the material and formal objects of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we have seen in what the devotion to Mary's Heart consists. Now for a complete understanding of the meaning of the devotion we shall investigate its end.

The nature of the devotion would indicate that its purpose is to unite men to God through Mary's Heart, and this is done primarily by two acts which are themselves part of the devotion the acts of consecration and reparation.

The Act of Consecration

On the thirty-first of October, 1942, our Holy Father Pius XII consecrated the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He solemnly renewed this act in the Basilica of Saint Peter on the eighth of December of that same year, and it was, he says, to commemorate this great solemn act of his Pontificate that the Feast of the Immaculate Heart was extended to the universal Church two years later.

The consecration by His Holiness Pius XII calls to mind the great consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart made by Pope Leo XIII, the twenty-fifth of May, 1899. We shall endeavor in the following pages to investigate in the light of these two actions and the encyclicals *Annum Sacrum* and *Miserentissimus Redemptor* the theological meaning and dogmatic foundation for the act of consecration, and then to see how consecration belongs in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart.

The word "consecration" (from con and sacrare) means to make or declare sacred, to set apart or devote to the service of God, to dedicate. Thus we say it is an act or rite by which a person is rendered sacred.

Let us examine consecration according to subject, object, and act itself.

The subject (subiectum cui) of consecration is the Sacred Heart or, in our case, the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We realize that all veneration to Mary as true devotion is terminated in her person, which fact is clearly confirmed by the words of Pius XII in the formula for consecration: "To Thee O my Immaculate Heart ... we consign and consecrate ourselves. ..." It is fitting, however, that we make this consecration to Mary's Immaculate Heart because, as we have seen, her Heart is all-inclusive of her various perfections and it is her Heart which symbolizes especially her ineffable charity and maternal love for us. All the titles employed by Pius XII in the act of consecration have fittingly a close relationship with Mary's Heart.

In consecration to the Immaculate Heart, the act is ultimately referred of course to God Himself, for one is consecrated to Mary only because she is God's Mother and by her offices, especially that of Queenship, is closely associated with Him, becoming for us a link or stepping-stone to God Himself.

Moreover, since consecration amounts to a total gift of self, an offering and pledging of complete and exclusive service and devotion, a handing over of not only what we have but what we are, such an act can be referred ultimately to God only, for He alone has the right of complete ownership to our body and soul. Consecration to Mary remains valid and salutary, however, because of the powers and offices God

has granted her, and because of her peculiar relationship with Him.

We note here that what we learn theologically about consecration from papal instructions, especially the encyclicals *Annum Sacrum* and *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, we apply analogously to Mary.

In the devotion to the Sacred Heart, we consecrate ourselves to our Lord inasmuch as the redemption of Christ and the shedding of His blood gave Him a claim to all men.

Analogously, a consecration can also be made to Mary because of her share in this Redemption and the all-embracing claims of her Motherhood.

We say "analogously," for, though the term "consecration" is used in reference to both Christ and to Mary, when used in reference to Mary and her Immaculate Heart, it has a partly identical and a partly different meaning. The difference arises because of the divergence in the sovereignty or dominion of Jesus and Mary upon which the consecration is based. The analogy, however, is not simply made metaphorically, but is an analogy of proper proportionality and, further, an analogy of attribution, for our dependence on Mary, the reason for our act, is essentially a dependence on God.

The object (*objectum quod*) of the act of consecration can be a real or moral person, e.g., individual, family, parish, diocese, state, or even the whole world. Therefore, besides individuals consecrating themselves, they can, apart from any direct participation in the act, be consecrated by someone whose office confers on him the authority and power to make a communal dedication. However, even when this communal dedication is offered by the proper authority, the act is more efficacious when the individual himself

actually participates in the consecration, for in such a case the will enters in a more direct and forceful manner into the act.

Although one invested with the proper power and authority can thus consecrate others in a communal dedication, ordinarily one individual as such cannot consecrate another. How, then, do we explain the fact that the Holy Father, in consecrating the whole world to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, included pagans and unbelievers?

Pope Leo XIII answered this difficulty by saying that the Supreme Pontiff is the Vicar of Him who through the shedding of His precious blood purchased a title to all men. The Pope consecrates all, in that all are redeemed by Christ. We note in the consecration of Leo XIII the use of two words, *commendamus* and *dedicamus*. These terms are not here employed as synonyms. Thus the Holy Father would commend all; and inasmuch as was in His power (*quantum in nobis*) would consecrate in a less perfect manner those over whom his influence was less direct.

Pius XII in the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart likewise mentions a double category: those belonging to the Mystical Body of Christ, and the whole world. This distinction is undoubtedly to be explained in a similar way.

In regard to the act of consecration itself, it is an act of religion, or more specifically devotion, embodying within itself also acts of faith and love. In every act of consecration we can distinguish three basic elements: a transition from the profane or secular to the dominion of the sacred, a constancy and stability in the new pledge or bond, and the existence of some kind of rite. The act implies an entire gift of self, of what we have and what we are. It is a giving

whereby we recognize not guardianship but ownership, not a giving of self for a time but perpetually.

This giving and dedicating of self which springs from charity and faith "proclaims our union with Christ" and is regarded by Pope Pius XI as the most fruitful of all acts of veneration. According to some it exceeds in excellence all other acts of veneration even regarded in globo. It is truly a most excellent manifestation of the virtues of religion and charity, being elicited by the one and imperated by the other.

By the act of consecration "we offer ourselves to God and become thereby, as it were, sacred to Him by reason of the sanctity which necessarily flows from an act of consecration, as the Angelic Doctor teaches (II-II, q. 81, a. 8, c.)."

The theological foundation for an act of consecration to the Sacred Heart or the Immaculate Heart of Mary, is the dominion or universal sovereignty of Christ and His Mother. In view of this fact a consecration implies two things the recognition of our dependence on Christ or Mary, and the regality and dominion which demands this submission. The act itself is essentially a subjection of self in a stable and lasting, fashion, for though it is to be repeated from time to time, it nonetheless implies an habitual attitude by which we live and act in dependence on Christ or Mary as our King and Queen.

The dogmatic foundation of consecration, then, is the dominion or universal sovereignty of Christ and Mary. In the case of Mary, her Queenship is considered by most theologians as an adequate foundation for our consecration, though some would regard her Maternity as also a foundation in view of the association and dependence of son on mother. Certainly the divine Maternity is the foundation of Mary's Queenship, and in this sense is also the foundation

of consecration. Commonly, however, we refer to her Queenship and dominion as the adequate foundation of our act.

In that the doctrine of Mary as our Queen in the order of grace is admitted by all we have a sufficient basis for a consecration, and since the authority of the Church recommends this consecration we have a definite guarantee of its worth. Thus it is fitting, and not by mere chance, that the opening words of the formula of consecration employed by His Holiness Pope Pius XII concern directly Mary's sovereignty . . . "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Help of Christians, Refuge of the Human Race. . . ."

The more directly and profoundly the nature of Mary's Queenship is understood, the more clearly we see the nature of our dependence on her in the order of grace and understand our consecration. Our Lord possesses dominion over us by a double right by nature (*iure nativo*), as the Son of God and King of Kings, and by an acquired title (*iure quaesito*), as our Redeemer "who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6), whereby we became "a purchased people" (1 Peter 2:9). With Mary, we see an analogy as Christ is our King, she is our Queen. As Christ has a natural right to sovereignty by reason of the hypostatic union, Mary has a right by reason of the divine Maternity. Christ has an acquired right by His redemption of men; Mary has an acquired right by reason of her coredemption. There can be added to this double title a third, namely, dominion through divine choice, for Pius XII, on the occasion of the coronation of the original statue of Our Lady at Fatima, says that Mary is Queen also by "singular [divine] election."

Today, we celebrate the sovereignty and dominion of our Lord on the Feast of Christ the King. Fittingly it is the custom of the faithful to reconsecrate themselves to the Sacred

Heart on this feast, and although the act of reparation to our Lord is most fitting on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the act of consecration, in view of its foundation and nature is equally fitting on the Feast of Christ the King.

Because of the parallelism in the Kingship of Christ and the Queenship of Mary, and in the act of consecration to the Sacred Heart and to the Immaculate Heart, we see the appropriateness of making our act of consecration to the "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary." The Queenship of Mary is of necessity linked with a consecration to her Immaculate Heart, and it is the Rosary, which among all devotions to Mary, brings out best the intimate connection between Mary's Queenship and her Immaculate Heart. For Mary's is a Queenship of love and mercy "Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae," sings the Church; and Pius XII said: "Her Queenship is essentially maternal, exclusively beneficent." Especially through the Rosary Mary is wont to dispense great mercy to society and to individuals."

Because of the value of a consecration made freely and willingly, we see the consecration to the Immaculate Heart as a marvelous tribute to Mary's Queenship and the most genuine manifestation of devotion to her Heart. It is more than an ordinary prayer, more than a promise, for a true and complete act of consecration is a state whereby we habitually realize the import of our belonging to Mary.

Consecration as an habitual state is more salutary than a single act or even series of acts. In consecration to the Immaculate Heart, the whole world and all in it is separated from the profane and given over totally and perpetually to Mary's Heart. In this way Mary is shown a complete veneration, and nothing of greater significance can be offered her. The solemn act of consecration in this sense synthesizes all other elements and acts which constitute

Marian devotion. The nobility of the act is also seen from its end, which according to the formula of Pope Pius XII is, "to hasten the triumph of the kingdom of God/" and by proclaiming Mary Blessed, to show Christ glory, love, and gratitude.

A solemn act of consecration besides its proper religious value as an external as well as internal rite has also a psychological and social value. Certainly in our own day when there is especially needed unity and harmony among men, it is only through a universal submission to the Queenship of Mary that unity and peace can be achieved. By the act of consecration we recognize that after the prayer which lives always in the Heart of Christ the most powerful prayer against the spirit of pride and evil separating classes and peoples is the prayer of Mary's Heart. Hence the Holy Father's words in the formula of consecration: "Queen of Peace . . . give the world ... the peace for which all peoples yearn, . . . Give peace to the peoples separated by error and discord . . . bring all to the One True Fold of Christ."

In view of the complete meaning of the act of consecration we can very well understand how Pope Leo XIII could call his consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart the "great act" of his pontificate. And if we legitimately apply the words of Leo XIII on consecration to those of Pius XI in *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, and to those of Pius XII in his formula of consecration, we see the act in our own case as the greatest tribute possible to Mary, and hence a tribute appropriate to her Immaculate Heart, the symbol of her eximious sanctity and of her charity.

If we carry our analogy further, we may say of the Immaculate Heart, as Pius XI said of the Heart of Jesus, that consecration is not simply a complement to the devotion, but the foremost practice which directly accompanies this

particular veneration. We see it as a necessary part of the complete devotion. If imitation once seemed the foremost of acts in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, it is not now less a part, although, with the proper understanding of the maternal Heart of Mary in connection with the universal feast, we see it as the effective realization in individual lives of the act of consecration.

Consecration to the Heart of Mary corresponds to and is the complement of consecration to the Heart of her divine Son, for similarly in this Marian devotion, in the act of consecration there is prominent the will to exchange for the love of our Mother and Coredemptrix our own human love. In our devotion we look precisely to Mary's love, and our acknowledging it should be characterized by a reciprocation of love: this is best expressed by an act of consecration to the symbol of Mary's love, her Immaculate Heart.

Thus the act of consecration, the greatest act of veneration, belongs to and is part of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, the greatest of Marian devotions.

The Act of Reparation

If the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is as fully analogous to the devotion to the Sacred Heart as with the decree "Urbis et Orbis" it appears to be, we must also say something about the act of reparation.

The word "reparation" is derived from *rursus* and *parare*, i.e., to prepare again, to restore or rebuild. In common usage it refers rather to a making of redress or amends. In the spiritual order it refers to the expiation of wrongs or injuries done to a person.

The theological concept of reparation is seen to rest in the very nature of the Christian dispensation. Although God might have gratuitously condoned men's offenses, in His Providence He judged it better to demand satisfaction and atonement for these injuries. Satisfaction for the offenses of men has of course already been adequately made through the sufferings, passion, and death of Christ. However, resting on Christ's adequate and superabundant atonement we can ourselves make reparation and satisfaction for the injuries done God.³⁷ In the life of a true Christian, reparation becomes a natural act prompted by faith and reason.

Reparation itself is an idea with which men have been acquainted since the fall of our first parents. In the Old Testament we have the classical example of King David making reparation for his sins.

The Christian idea of reparation is first associated with our blessed Lord, who by the sacrifice of Calvary atoned for our sins. The idea of reparation to our Blessed Mother dates likewise from the time of Calvary, for the words of our Lord to Saint John, "Behold thy Mother," are implicitly words calling for reparation to Mary whose sufferings at the foot of the cross, caused by men's sins, were an outrage and offense to her whom God had chosen as His Mother and Spouse, and as the Queen of mankind. Reparation to Christ and Mary, then, has been part of the Christian religion since Calvary. In the devotion to the Sacred Heart it is Christ's redemptive love that spontaneously calls forth from our hearts this act of reparation for graces and gifts spurned.

In the devotion to the Immaculate Heart it is Mary's love for God and Jesus her Son as well as her love for men redeemed by the Blood of Christ that calls forth our reparation for the sinful ingratitude and forgetfulness of men.

Reparation to Mary is rooted in her union with Christ. Jesus and Mary, inseparable in life and action, are likewise inseparable in cult and in our acts of reparation. Every outrage committed against our blessed Lord is necessarily an outrage to His Mother and causes her more displeasure than offenses committed directly against her own person.

Since Jesus and Mary in virtue of one, not two distinct decrees, are united inseparably in the work of Redemption, it is proper to integrate in some way the practice of reparation in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart. Reparation made to the Sacred Heart and reparation made to the Immaculate Heart are indeed acts which complement one another and which are most consonant with the origin, nature, and particular practices of each devotion.

Pope Pius XI in *Miserentissimus Redemptor* says that to the "act of consecration, another, that of reparation must be added." All, because of original and actual sin, are obliged to make this act, for as the act of consecration "proclaims and confirms our union with Christ, so the act of expiation, by purifying us from our sins, is the beginning of such union."

According to the Holy Father, in honoring God it is not sufficient that our worship and prayer be that of adoration and gratitude alone, we must also through the act of reparation "satisfy the just anger of God" for our innumerable sins.

In the case of reparation to Mary, then, the act of reparation prepares us for the union which the act of consecration effects, and therefore along with our acts of veneration and imitation is actually embodied in our consecration to the Immaculate Heart.

The act of reparation, though subordinated to that of consecration, possesses in itself advantages both individual and social. The individual advantages are seen in the indulgences both plenary and partial attached to making this act through various formulas. Pope Pius X, to foster the desire among the faithful to make reparation to Mary, granted a plenary indulgence to those who observed the First Saturday Devotion.

Individual advantages are guaranteed also in that those making these acts bring joy to the maternal Heart of Mary, and will in return be blessed by her. "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that doth penance" (Luke 15:7).

The social benefits are seen in that, with every individual who makes reparation, society as a whole is benefited. "If I find in Sodom fifty just within the city I will spare the whole place for their sake" (Gen. 19:26). Further, even though the reparation we make is for self-purification, it often includes to some degree the character of reparation for our neighbor.

In all our acts of reparation in atonement for our sins we are mindful that Mary herself is the model and "Mother of Reparation." It is she who through her sufferings at the foot of the cross merited the title of Coredemptrix and Universal Mediatrix. Through her example of love for God we are led to a closer union with our divine Saviour, and through our acts of reparation and through our consecration to Mary there is effected the purpose of our devotion to her Immaculate Heart, the uniting of ourselves to God through the Heart of His Blessed Mother.

Chapter 4 - The Excellence of the Devotion to the Immaculate Heart

The Devotion to the Immaculate Heart: The Synthesis of Marian Doctrine and Devotion

In our discussion of the object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we explained how we honor under the symbolism of the Heart the love and sanctity of the Blessed Mother.

It is because of the nature of Mary's love, and because of what constitutes her sanctity, that we can say the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is the synthesis of all Marian doctrine and devotion. The love of Mary as the foundation and root of all her virtues² and the motivating force which prompted every action of her life, and her sanctity as the underlying foundation of all her gifts and privileges, are the connecting link between her Immaculate Heart and all Marian doctrine.

In establishing this point it is not necessary to enter into the discussions on how and precisely to what extent Mary was sanctified through her divine Maternity, or how grace and the divine Maternity are interrelated, but rather to see that in the symbolism of Mary's Heart, that is, within the scope of her sanctity and love, both her Maternity and her fullness of grace, and in fact all her offices, gifts, and privileges are contained.

We can reduce Marian doctrine to four headings Mary's divine Maternity; her prerogatives, "negative" and positive; her part in our redemption; and her exaltation.

Now it is from this first heading, Mary's divine Maternity, that the other offices and privileges are seen to flow, for it is Mary's Motherhood which is the reason for her prerogatives, the means of her sharing in our redemption, and the foundation of her exaltation. Because of her divine Maternity she enjoyed her unique relationship with the Most Holy Trinity and her maternal relationship with all mankind. Further, in virtue of her Maternity there is derived not only the dignity of Mary's role in the Christian pattern, but also her entire sanctity which underlies it. We may contemplate this sanctity underlying Mary's whole life and activity first in her Immaculate Conception and in her fullness of grace, and then in her perfect virginity. Throughout her mortal life this sanctity was increased through her meritorious acts, through the Incarnation of Christ, and through the Sacraments.

Mary's part in our redemption - in fact, all her relations with creatures flow also from her dignity as Mother of God. As the Mother of Christ, the head of the Mystical Body, she is the Mother of the members of that Body.

Also as a result of her Maternity Mary enjoys the privilege of her bodily Assumption into heaven, where because she is the Mother of Christ, the King of all creatures, she is our Queen, and because she is associated with Christ, the source of all grace, she is our Mediatrix.

Hence all the offices of Mary and the sanctity that necessarily underlies them are connected intimately with the divine Maternity, dependent upon and resultant from it.

Our devotion to the Immaculate Heart, in that it looks to the entire sanctity of the Mother of God (" . . . sub humis Cordis symbolo Dei Genitricis eximiam singularemque animae sanctitatem . . .") as the reason for showing her honor, will of necessity include all the truths and mysteries of her life and

activity, and be in fact a summation of them all. But further, if in this devotion we look especially to the crowning of this sanctity, Mary's love, and see it as intimately connected with her Maternity, then our devotion is even more clearly the synthesis of all Marian theology.

Mary's life up to the Incarnation was characterized by love, and it was the love of her heart which entered into the act of her will in the consent of the Incarnation. Love had disposed her to be worthy of her office of Motherhood and induced her to accept the role of Mother with all that it entailed. The Incarnation was essentially an act of love on the part of God (John 3: 16) to which Mary perfectly responded. Thus throughout her mortal life it was Mary's love which characterized her associations with Christ and marked her days up to the time of her Assumption. It is love again which makes her most efficacious in her intercession for men as our Mediator and Queen in heaven.

All Marian doctrine, then, as contingent upon the divine Maternity, is synthesized in the devotion to Mary's maternal Heart; for in her Heart we see the sanctity that underlies her every gift and privilege and the charity which crowns it. The Church's complete formula is: "Hoc porro cultu Ecclesia Cordi Immaculate Beatae Mariae Virginis debitum honorem tribuit, cum sub huius Cordis symbolo Dei Genitricis eximiam singularemque animae sanctitatem, praesertim vero ardentissimum erga Deum ac Iesum Filium suum amorem, maternamque erga homines divino Sanguine redemptos pietatem devotissime veneratur." Thus all Marian doctrine is implied in the devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart.

The Synthesis of All Marian Devotions

We mentioned also that the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is the synthesis of all other Marian, devotions. This fact follows quite logically if the preceding assertion, that the devotion to the Immaculate Heart summarizes all Marian doctrine, has been demonstrated, for all true devotion has a doctrinal basis.

In examining the object of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we saw the nature of the devotion to be such as to distinguish it from a general devotion to the Blessed Mother. In devotion to Mary's Heart the mysteries of her life and all her offices connected with her person are not taken collectively, but are seen as resultant upon and connected with her supernatural love. All her privileges and titles to veneration are considered under this aspect. Further, the immediate material object, the physical heart as a symbol of Mary's love and sanctity, clearly sets this particular veneration off from a general devotion.

On the other hand, the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is not simply another Marian devotion, but is actually the crown and summation of them all, a synthesis of all other particular Marian venerations. The formal object, though particular in the aspect under which we regard the excellencies of Mary, is nonetheless inclusive of all the individual and singular excellencies we regard in Mary in other specific Marian devotions. The Church in this particular veneration renders Mary due honor, "since under the symbol of this Heart the Church most devoutly venerates the eximious and singular sanctity of the soul of the Mother of God, and especially her most ardent love for God and Jesus her Son, and her maternal solicitude for men redeemed by divine Blood. Thus, in looking to the most ardent charity and the extraordinary and singular sanctity of Mary, a devotion comprehending what sanctity and love by nature entail will comprehend also any other particular devotion, for

ultimately it is Mary's love and sanctity which animate and give value to all other venerations.

The devotion to the Immaculate Heart, because of the extension of its formal object, is but inadequately distinct from other Marian venerations in that it includes them.¹¹ Every particular veneration looks to some excellency of Mary which must of necessity be rooted in her sanctity and love, and hence be included in the devotion to her Heart. But because of its completeness the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is called the devotion among all Marian devotions. In the perfection of Mary's maternal Heart all her excellencies are present. To honor her Heart is to honor her totally. In honoring any particular phase of her life or any particular aspect of her sanctity we honor it in its very source, her perfect love. Her charity, which we look to especially in this devotion, underlies the perfection and merit of all her acts and is the explanation of the mysteries of her most holy life which make up all other Marian devotions.

In brief, then, we call the devotion to the Immaculate Heart the center of all Marian devotions because from the excellencies we see in the Heart of Mary proceeds whatever excellency we venerate in any other devotion, and conversely, through the perfection we may venerate in other particular devotions, we should ultimately come to the veneration of Mary's Immaculate Heart.

In view of the comprehension and transcendency of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart it is fitting that the universal feast be celebrated on the Octave Day of the Assumption as the coronation and the complement of all other Marian feasts.

We might well ask, is any other devotion to be particularly associated with the devotion to the Immaculate Heart? We

answer: the devotion of the Most Holy Rosary is closely linked with the devotion to the Immaculate Heart for several reasons.

Since the symbolism of the Heart is not ordinarily sufficient in itself to bring to mind all that the devotion to the Immaculate Heart contains and implies, hence the Rosary, as the handmaid of the devotion, in reflecting and revealing through its mysteries the love of Mary's Heart which vivified her entire life, augments the comprehension of the symbolism. Pope Leo XIII in speaking of the Rosary referred to it as that "prayer . . . offered among all nations ... to her most pure Heart." The above is true especially in regard to what might be called to mind by what we have referred to as the "metaphorical heart."

Further, in the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we have as part of the devotion and connatural to it, the following acts: a reciprocation of love, imitation, invocation, consecration, and reparation. Now the Rosary is a most excellent means of exercising these connatural acts, for it moves us to love, in showing Mary's Heart as loving; to imitation, in showing Mary's Heart as representative of all her virtues and as the model of virtue; to invocation, in showing her Heart as maternal and powerful; to consecration, in that it shows Mary's Heart as that of our Queen; and to reparation, in showing Mary's Heart as participating in our redemption.

Again, because of the scope of its mysteries and the theology of the "Hail Mary", the Rosary is by nature an excellent and most suitable means whereby we honor Mary's Immaculate Heart. As the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is the crown of Marian devotions, correspondingly, of all special prayers in honor of Mary, the Rosary has "pride of place." The appropriateness of this association is further

brought out by the formula of Consecration of Pope Pius XII in addressing Mary as "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary."

The excellency of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is readily seen from what we have previously said of its relationship to all other Marian devotions. We might further point out that, as it is the complement of all other particular venerations, it has a correspondingly superior sanctifying value in that in this devotion we perfect ourselves completely, for we imitate Mary not simply in one special way, but in all her virtues and perfections.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the formal object of our devotion is inclusive of the total perfection of Mary. Because of this extension of the formal object the devotion has the power to excite the will to more intense acts of veneration. These acts in turn augment the habit from which they proceed. Hence we say that the devotion to the Immaculate Heart is superior to all others because through the superior excellency of its object it augments the intensity of our acts of devotion, and because the intensity of these acts increases the habit which produces them.

Further, since the first act of the devotion is a spontaneous act of love corresponding to the love of Mary, and since our actions are more meritorious when they proceed from charity wherein they are more free, we see again the excellence of this particular veneration.

Finally, the connatural acts which are part of the devotion, especially that of consecration which we saw as the "greatest act of veneration," give the devotion to the Immaculate Heart an excellence superior to that of any other particular veneration.

Conclusion

In this treatment of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart we have attempted the following: to investigate how the devotion has come into the life of the Church, to ascertain what is the object of the devotion, and to see its purpose. We have also pointed out its relationship to all Marian doctrine and other Marian devotions.

In the first section of our study, the historical part, we have examined the origins of the devotion in Scripture and Tradition and its development in private and public veneration. Finally we have seen its incorporation into the liturgy of the universal Church.

In the following chapter we have considered the veneration of Mary in general and the devotion to her Immaculate Heart in particular; here we have examined especially the material and formal objects of the devotion.

In the third section of our work, by showing the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart as the highest tribute and greatest act of veneration we can possibly offer Mary, and by pointing out the value of an Act of Reparation, we have explained how this devotion unites us to God through Mary.

Finally, we have indicated the excellence of this particular veneration as the synthesis of all Marian doctrine and devotion.

By such a consideration we have examined the devotion in its fundamental causes, and we have considered its complete object in all its aspects: *an sit, quid sit, quomodo sit*.

We hope that through this outline the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary may in some way be extended.

About This eBook

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